



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**6<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Day 9**

**15<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, May 17, 2007**

Pages 265 - 302

**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, May 17, 2007

### Members Present

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Hon. Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Hon. Kevin Menicoche, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

### ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to raise a point of personal privilege. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. What is your point of privilege?

#### Point Of Privilege

**Mr. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(Translation)...Members of the Legislative Assembly are often called upon to represent and show support for their constituents in a wide variety of situations. It is a fundamental part of our job that every issue, every complaint and every person should get equal attention from his or her MLA.

Last week, I wrote a letter calling for a lenient sentence for a constituent convicted of sexual assault. It was not my intention to condone the actions of this man or in any way make light of the seriousness of his crime. Sexual assault and other acts of violence, particularly against women, are inexcusable. Every person who is in a position of leadership must condemn such acts without hesitation or qualification.

My letter was not intended to lessen the seriousness of this crime or its impact on the victim. Rather, my intention was to act for the well-being of the other victims, the family who rely on his income for support.

Mr. Speaker, I now realize that this letter showed a lack of sensitivity for the victim, who showed great courage to press charges in the first place. I also understand that letters such as these send a message that acts of violence against women are acceptable or less serious than other crimes. They are not.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer my sincere apology to the victim for my lack of sensitivity and poor judgement. I also wish to apologize for any additional pain and suffering my actions have caused her family. Leaders must not only support those who request help, but also fully contemplate the implications of their actions on others. I will do my best to meet the standards in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Members. (Translation ends)

Members of the Legislative Assembly are often called upon to represent and show support for their constituents in a wide variety of situations. It is a fundamental part of our job that every issue, every complaint and every person should get equal attention from his or her MLA.

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and other acts of violence, particularly against women, are inexcusable. Every person who is in a position of leadership must condemn such acts without hesitation or qualification.

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Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer my sincere apology to the victim for my lack of sensitivity and poor judgement. I also wish to apologize for any additional pain and suffering my actions have caused her family. Leaders must not only support those who request help, Mr. Speaker, but also fully contemplate the implications of their actions on others. Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to meet the standards in the future. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, Members.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Before I go to the orders of the day, colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery and the presence of a former Member of this House, former Speaker Sam Gargan.

---Applause

Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Dent.

### ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

#### Minister's Statement 25-15(6): Elder Abuse Awareness

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, NWT seniors will recognize World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which has the theme of My World, Your World, Our World, Free of Elder Abuse. Sadly, 80 percent of abuse or neglect of older adults goes unreported. Many NWT seniors feel isolated and alone, even when they have family visiting regularly.

Also next month, we will celebrate Seniors' Week from June 16<sup>th</sup> to June 27<sup>th</sup>. Seniors' Week is an opportunity for us to take some time to recognize the importance of seniors in our northern communities. The theme this year, Seniors Helping Seniors, reflects how seniors work together to improve the lives of others by sharing experience and values.

These two themes go hand in hand. Seniors are often the only ones in a community who have the trust of other seniors, and they must help each other access the help they need. Because of their shared experience, seniors are often experts on issues such as the abuse of older adults.

Mr. Speaker, all of us should encourage seniors to talk with other seniors about their issues. We can help victims of abuse become aware they do not have to live with

abuse or neglect. Knowing this can help empower victims to feel safe enough to report abuse to the proper authorities so seniors can be protected.

The wisdom of our seniors and elders is one of our greatest assets. No one should ever ignore abuse of older adults; we owe them a debt of gratitude that can only be paid when we stand up to protect their right to be free of violence.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the NWT Seniors' Society, the Yellowknife Seniors' Society and the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors. These groups are good examples of seniors helping other seniors.

Our seniors work hard for their communities. Let us make sure they live their lives in peace and happiness, free from abuse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement On Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since we are on the topic of elder abuse, it's a good time to read my Member's statement to talk about some of the housing issues that have come to my attention lately.

Mr. Speaker, about six months ago, the Deninu Kue Seniors' Society, which represents the interest of nearly 100 seniors in Deninu Kue, all of an average age of about 68 years old, made a recommendation to the Housing Corporation to build a six-plex to house seniors in independent living somewhere near the seniors complex. Mr. Speaker, the regional office came back outlining what the Housing Corporation requires in order to carry this initiative forward such as looking for a suitable location, researching land ownership, negotiating land owners to acquire property and gathering written support from various local government organizations in order for them to follow up on this initiative.

The Deninu Kue Seniors' Society did follow up with the Housing Corporation's request from the regional office and eventually the property was purchased by the Housing Corporation and all indications pointed towards the next step of moving forward on this project by putting out a tender for the construction of a seniors' six-plex and this was considered great news for the hard work of the Deninu Kue Seniors' Society.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, the Deninu Kue Seniors' Society has been informed that the Housing Corporation is again questioning the feasibility of a seniors six-plex and is wondering if the units will be occupied by seniors and would like the Deninu Kue Seniors' Society to seek further support from the local government organizations, something they have already completed. They have assured the Housing Corp that they do have seniors who would be willing to move in as soon as construction is completed. Understandably the reluctance of the Deninu Kue Seniors' Society to go out and seek the same support from local government organizations has created a lot of frustration amongst our elders and is viewed as simply a stalling tactic by the Housing Corp to follow up on their

previous commitment. The Deninu Kue Seniors' Society would like to know why.

Later today, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of the Housing Corp, at the appropriate time, why the Housing Corp continues to put up barriers and hoops when things are moving along in what seemingly seems to be a cooperative, positive and collaborative manner. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### Member's Statement On Regional Development And Autonomy

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement is going to be on the issue of our regions coming to age, Mr. Speaker. I have had the opportunity of being able to accompany the Minister of MACA, Mr. McLeod, and also Premier Handley, leader of the Government of the Northwest Territories, to attend the Association of Municipalities meeting in Norman Wells, along with my colleague, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Speaker, the issue I am talking about is in our regions, the smaller communities; they seem to be lacking certain basic essential services that other centres have in their communities. Still in our region alone, in the Sahtu, we are playing catch up, the catch up region that, in terms of services, programs, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the quality of living we have. The mayor of Tulita talked about going to the Northern Store and buying a loaf of bread for \$6. It costs even more to make bread in Tulita and those are the prices that we have to live with. It seems to be that our region seems to be lacking the support, Mr. Speaker.

The people in the Sahtu are light years ahead in terms of things that they can do from the South. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but some of the government programs are still in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Look at the Colville Lake Health Centre. Look at the services of no RCMP in Colville Lake in this day and age. Some of the other communities in the Northwest Territories have those services and it is good for those communities because they require it, so why not in the Sahtu region at this time, day and age, if activity is happening in the region there? We don't have those types of services and the government can, if they want to, bring those services into the community.

Our region has been babysat for too long by other regions. Look at the Department of Transportation. The Inuvik office for the air and transportation is in Fort Smith, but other departments are babysitting our region. We want some autonomy. We want to control our lives. We want to do what is right for the people of the Northwest Territories. There is lots of activity. So let's give back to the region that deserves and not be isolated. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### Member's Statement On Security Protocol For The GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in recent years, governments have turned more and more to electronic databases to help them manage vast amounts of personal information used to carry out

programs and services. In fact, just this week, the Minister of Health and Social Services announced a major partnership between the GNWT and Canada Health Infoway that will see all NWT communities participating in an electronic health records network within the next year.

Such announcements typically hail electronic databases as promising efficiencies and enhanced quality of services. What they fail to mention are the risks to privacy that the new ease of access to information like social insurance numbers, addresses and bank account numbers entails if appropriate security measures are not put in place. As our Information and Privacy Commissioner has warned repeatedly, identity theft is on the rise everywhere. We cannot afford to pretend that we, in the Northwest Territories, are somehow invulnerable to this threat. Aside from identity theft, there are many other ways that personal information can be misused if it falls into the wrong hands. Having the information conveniently packaged and searchable in a database only increases that risk.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not my intent to suggest that we do away with electronic databases which are everywhere and have become the essential part of many government and business activities. I raise these concerns to point out that, along with the efficiencies and enhancements, there are new responsibilities that have come with the electronic age. I would think that, at a minimum, these responsibilities include doing realistic assessments of the risks to privacy, implementing plans to mitigate those risks such as security measures to prevent unauthorized access to personal information, and establishing protocols for dealing with breaches including disclosure that a breach has occurred to any persons who may have been affected.

Earlier this week, I questioned the Minister of Human Resources about a possible breach of the government's PeopleSoft system which includes extremely sensitive personal information on all government employees and raises serious security concerns. As far as I am aware, the department has not taken any steps to communicate with employees about whether or not a breach did occur and who might be affected. I found it extremely disturbing that the Minister was unable to tell me what the protocol would be if a breach did occur.

Mr. Speaker, employees turn over social insurance numbers, addresses and bank accounts on faith that the GNWT, as their employer, will fulfill its responsibility to protect that information and ensure it is only used for the purpose for which it was intended. They have a right to expect that the GNWT has strict security systems in place and protocols to deal with any breaches. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**Member's Statement On Relocation Of Tuktoyaktuk Municipal Infrastructure Due To Coastal Erosion**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I had an opportunity to meet with the Premier and some of his colleagues and also the mayor and deputy mayor of Tuktoyaktuk. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise a concern in regard to the important need to identify immediate funding dollars for relocation of municipal infrastructure requirements for the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk. I say this, Mr. Speaker, because the

shorelines in the community of Tuktoyaktuk are rapidly deteriorating because of permafrost melting which causes erosion along the west and north end of the community.

Mr. Speaker, the hamlet council has raised this issue with MACA officials from Inuvik on numerous occasions during the review of their five-year capital plan. As an example, the gravesite is full to capacity. The location of the landfill site causes concern for potential health problems, and the point on the north end of town is eroding rapidly to a point where someday the houses located inside the harbour may eventually flood if protection to the sandpit is not protected.

Mr. Speaker, the hamlet council is very concerned and would like this government to immediately direct and discuss with MACA in implementing a plan to provide emergency funding to address the erosion problem in the location of the landfill site, gravesite and the need for gravel requirements.

The hamlet has already identified, in their capital plan, for the relocation of these municipal services. The proposed services are identified on the east side of the harbour and are in close proximity to the proposed access road to source 177.

Mr. Speaker, if these services are not addressed immediately by MACA and discussions with the hamlet, the community, as I said, may be flooded in the near future.

Therefore, I am requesting MACA to immediately meet with the hamlet council of Tuktoyaktuk to discuss and provide emergency funding to address the relocation of the gravesite, a landfill site, and gravel requirements and the ocean problem. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of MACA at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

**Member's Statement On Benefits Arising From Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Development**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I read an article that said that there is a meeting going on today between the proponents of the pipeline and the Government of Canada. I got to thinking when they mentioned some of the players that were going to be at the meeting, where was the GNWT in this picture, Mr. Speaker? It is happening too much lately that, with all the talk going on with the pipeline, the GNWT continues to be left out of the picture. I read further on in the article that a document was filed with the National Energy Board. They talk about Alberta will be the main beneficiary from the project; 10,245 jobs to Alberta, 3,200 jobs to the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, where is the NWT in all of this? Thanks to the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, we have some stake in it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear! Hear!

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thirty years ago, Thomas Berger put a moratorium on pipeline development. That was the best thing he ever did, I think, for the people of the Northwest Territories. It gave us an opportunity to get into the picture, take advantage of some of the opportunities. The Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in and the people of the Sahtu have seized that opportunity and put themselves in a position

where they could see some benefit from the pipeline for them and the people that they represent.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions later on for the Minister of ITI or the Premier. I am going to need to know where we are at the table, if we are at the table. Mr. Speaker, this pipeline talk and all of the politics surrounding it across the Northwest Territories is just getting a little out of hand. This pipeline is being used as leverage in land claims talks and it is not acceptable. We could stay at home, sit on our hands and wait for money to fall from the skies, but no. There are people out there. I represent a lot of them that do plan on going out there, seizing the opportunity, seeing what they can benefit out of this pipeline. I want to make sure that the people that I represent and people in the Northwest Territories, as a whole, benefit from the construction of this pipeline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

#### **Member's Statement On Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. During my two terms here as MLA, I have been approached on many occasions by constituents dealing with disability challenges in their families. This can range from parents dealing with dementia, adults with housing accessibility issues, children suffering from mental capacity issues, and caregivers desperate for financial and program support as they cope with their family's disability.

Mr. Speaker, most disabled persons don't want to be wards of the state. They want to remain free and independent. They are very proud of being on their own. In most instances, this also requires great family sacrifice and perseverance. Here is where government can and, in many cases, Mr. Speaker, does step in. For instance, in housing and in program supports, we have made some considerable advances. But it is in the area of income support that causes probably the most strain and stress on these families, Mr. Speaker. Under our current income support system where clients whose income or value is above a certain threshold, essentially our system forces them to liquidate their own assets and, in effect, perhaps even impoverish themselves before they can become eligible for income support. We force them into even further poverty through sometimes punitive policies that lend persons with long-term and perhaps lifetime disabilities along with those who the Income Support Program is truly designed for, those who need temporary assistance in order to get back up and back into society.

Mr. Speaker, our current system makes it easier, perhaps even unavoidable sometimes, for families and caregivers to walk away from disabled ones, loved ones, and have the GNWT assume responsibility for institutional care. The cost of this, of course, can be enormous compared to the cost of the well thought out reasonable program that would assist family members and caregivers to maintain their independence, keep loved ones at home and look after them in that very safe and supportive environment. So, Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go to close some policy gaps in our support systems for persons with disabilities. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Member's Statement On Support For The Taltson Hydro Expansion Project**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am nearing 12 years of service in this House going back to the last century and to pre-division along with a number of my colleagues here in this House.

---Laughter

It has been that long since people have talked about what we do with the surplus power at Taltson dam. Back then, Mr. Speaker, the price of fuel was probably about 35 cents a litre. There was a very dark time in the '90s when the economic circumstances and future of the Northwest Territories was very bleak. But over the years, the circumstances have changed and improved. For the last 10 years, we have had diamond mines start up in the North Slave and that growth has only continued. The attractiveness of the surplus power in Taltson has only grown with time. The price of oil is now \$65 a barrel. It has reached even higher at times and it shows no signs of diminishing.

I want to stand here today and give my unequivocal support to the Taltson project. There has been a lot of work done. We spent years talking about it. In the last few years, we have actually moved into the planning and some of the implementation pieces that have to be put in place. We know that diamond mines have now been operating for 10 years, so time is of the essence, though I, like most others, am optimistic that development in the North Slave is only going to continue as more and more discoveries are made of the different resources that are there.

It is very important that we proceed with this process. We started today. It is a five-year project to be able to flick the switch and have power to the diamond mines. So we have to commit to this process. I would like to commend the Government of the Northwest Territories for their work on this, as well as the inclusion of the aboriginal partners into this process and project. I know, in my community, this is seen as a very important project. We don't have oil and gas. We don't have the diamonds. What we have is hydro and the Taltson and hydro on the Slave, and this particular Taltson project is very important to us. I fully support it. The Slave River potential hydro development clearly will require a lot more discussion for me to be convinced that that is the case for that project. But Taltson gets definitely a thumbs up. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### **Member's Statement On Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to speak to the issue of squatters and land availability in the Yellowknife area. We know there is a big demand for recreational properties. We also know that because no new leases have been made available for many years, some people have helped themselves and went out to build structures, some more permanent than others, without permission or further legal right to be out there on that land. The area around the Ingraham Trail is particularly affected by these so-called trespassers or



even squatters. There have been many previous debates in this House about this issue. Discussions have taken place and commitments were even made. For example, the previous MACA Minister promised some sort of interim agreement prior to the affected First Nations final land claim. He promised this agreement would free up land for recreational use. Last year, the government still hoped for a land use plan for the Yellowknife watershed development area. Where are those initiatives, Mr. Speaker? They are nowhere to be found.

With summer before us, it is just a gentle reminder that the government needs to pursue its previous commitments it has made in this House to work towards a solution.

I would like to point out the importance of a tri-party discussion in order to find a solution for the increased demand for recreational lands, while respecting the ongoing land claim process and self-government negotiations. MACA needs to work with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the land claimant groups to solve this issue, Mr. Speaker, once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, opportunity is before us. With such approaches as win-win solutions, we can find ways to do this. I will give you some examples of those win-wins. We would open up more lots so recreation opportunities can happen. We have cottage country within five minutes from Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker. We would also be able to eliminate the need for people squatting on that land, which is wrong and they are not doing much about it.

The last thing we could say is we could be creating tax-based opportunities out there for First Nations people as well as the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories. So, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of ways we can go on this. It all works well. The bottom line is First Nations people are concerned about what is going on out there and people with legal rights are concerned with what is going on out there. So, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of MACA at the appropriate time. I would like to finally see him do something on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

#### **Member's Statement On Range Lake Constituency News**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this being the last day of the session before August, I would like to take a moment to highlight the activities of the Range Lake North School and Range Lake constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Grade 6 boys and girls soccer teams who took both banners in the recent Super Soccer tournament. I would also like to take a moment to recognize the work of Range Lake North School Parents Advisory Group who has completed another successful family fun night a few weeks ago. This is a one night event where they raise over \$10,000. They have done this every year for the last 12 years. I am proud to say that I have been a part of eight of them. The money raised stays in school for the benefit of students and parents. That kind of fundraising doesn't come without a lot of time spent organizing and preparing by the Parents Advisory Group, the parents, teachers, students and the larger community of Range Lake as a whole. I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks.

Mr. Speaker, the Range Lake North School Parents Advisory Group has also been very active and vocal about the latest Yellowknife school space issue. I have had countless conversations with them. I have listened to them and discussed ideas. I value their opinions, commitment and thoughtfulness on this issue. I want to thank them for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, as we leave today, our work doesn't stop here. We will be doing intense travelling, doing public hearings on many bills before us. Our work will continue in our offices and communities. I look forward to being in my community with my constituents and spending every opportunity with them. I would like to wish everyone safe travels. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

#### **Member's Statement On Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak today about the future of our government's operations. I have spoken previously in this House about the GNWT's lack of a comprehensive human resource plan or strategy. I believe strongly that, as a government, we need to address the growth and direction of our public service. For the past four years, I have witnessed a steady stream of knee-jerk reactions and ill-conceived position growth. Sure, we are expanding our workforce in the area of health care, teachers and social workers, but that does not explain the growth over a seven-year period of 3,761 in 1999 to over 5,500 today. That, Mr. Speaker, is an increase of over 44 percent. The government has grown by close to 1,800 positions in just seven years.

After division took place with Nunavut in 1999, it would have made sense at the time to come up with a human resource strategy. Instead, Mr. Speaker, we struggle year to year, budget to budget, supplementary appropriation to supplementary appropriation approving more and more positions. Mr. Speaker, I'm not opposed to supporting positions where they make sense and they're needed, but I have to be convinced that the subject department has not got the capacity to get the work done.

Not only have we seen growth to over 5,500 employees, we also have an acute addiction to consultants, contractors and services which, Mr. Speaker, oftentimes are rendered by former employees of this government. With the completion of land claims and the move towards self-government and implementation of those claims, we should be looking, as a government, at areas of our operations which we could devolve into the regions where claims are settled. To date, and to my knowledge, nothing, Mr. Speaker -- and I mean nothing -- has happened to address this issue. Why can't the government get a focus over a vision on what our future human resource requirements are going to be? We spend nearly \$500 million annually on it. It should be a top priority of any government.

Judging by the answers I've received to date, I'm not the least bit convinced that this government actually cares about this situation, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to ask some questions of the Minister responsible for Human Resources at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Member's Statement On Recognition Of Mackenzie Delta Legislative Pages**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank yourself as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, but, more importantly, this House for supporting the Page Program to allow students from the outlying communities, the small communities, ridings, to participate in the goings on of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to have an opportunity to have two Pages here this week to partake of what happens in this Legislative Assembly. From Fort McPherson and Aklavik, I have Allison Neyando from Fort McPherson, Chief Julius School...

---Applause

...and Trudy Kogiak from Aklavik who attends Moose Kerr School.

---Applause

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, it gives the students an opportunity to go back to our small communities to talk to their classmates and explain the goings on of this Legislative Assembly and, more importantly, to encourage other classmates to take part in this program.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a very crucial program that allows the smaller communities, and students throughout the Northwest Territories, to see exactly what this government does, what the Legislative Assembly processes do and, more importantly, the goings on in this House.

Again, I'd like to thank my two young students for taking part in this program. As I drove them in from the airport, I encouraged them that the toughest part of the job that they had to do here was stay awake, because it is sometimes pretty dry.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hey!

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** So with that, I'd like to thank you very much. Enjoy your trip home and I wish you all the best. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. Reports of standing and special committees. Honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**ITEM 4: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Committee Report 3-15(6): Standing Committee On Social Programs Report On Matters Related To Child And Family Services Act**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report from the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on Matters Related to Child and Family Services Act. But before I do that, I would just like to take a moment to say a special thanks to the hard-working committee of Social Programs.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear! Hear!

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Right on!

**MS. LEE:** But especially, I'd like to take a moment to thank the hard-working staff of the committee, Mr. Speaker. I have to tell you that we did intense travels: six

communities in six days, covering places like Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Colville Lake, Behchoko. Not the most accessible places, but the operation went like a smooth, oiled machine. I want to just express our thanks, on behalf of the committee, to the staff. I want to thank especially Mr. Robert Collinson who has the stupendous capacity to put into words all of our thoughts and everything we hear from our communities, so if I could just do that. I might add, he doesn't get paid enough for his work.

---Laughter

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Right on.

**Background**

Mr. Speaker, during the Standing Committee on Social Program's review of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, Members heard from a number of northerners who expressed concerns about the current act and its application.

We would like to thank all of the presenters in the communities of Yellowknife, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Colville Lake and Behchoko who took the time to make their concerns known to committee.

In addition to the feedback during the hearings on Bill 5, committee members, in meeting the day-to-day needs of their constituents, regularly deal with families whose lives are being dictated by provisions of the Child and Family Services Act.

There is nothing in this report, by way of recommendation, that will detract from the primary task of the child protection worker, which is to protect our children from physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

The recommendations and discussions in this report focus on strengthening existing child protection practices and ensuring that all provisions contained in the Child and Family Services Act are implemented and utilized in all communities in the Northwest Territories.

**Need For Consistency In Utilizing Translation Services**

Mr. Speaker, the committee understands that the primary consideration is the safety of the child and that it may not always be possible to have translation available when removing a child from a dangerous situation. The committee is not suggesting any delay in removing a child from a dangerous situation because of the availability of a translator.

During our hearings in Yellowknife on Bill 5, we heard from Mr. Brad Enge, a lawyer in private practice, who expressed his concern about people who come into contact with a child protection worker not always having access to translators and sometimes signing documents, like plan of care agreements, without really understanding what they are signing.

Mr. Yakeleya also had recent experience with a constituent whose dealings regarding her child's apprehension were exacerbated by her limited English skills and not having access to translation during crucial stages of the apprehension process.

Just after the introduction of Bill 5 by the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Yakeleya had the opportunity to question Minister Roland about the need to make sure that parents understand and have the process explained to them in their own language. Minister Roland replied

that the offer is made to the parents whenever the department gets involved.

Mr. Speaker, what may be missing from the process is some understanding of the cultural and emotional factors that may lead someone to decline translation services, when in fact they do need such services.

The development of local child and family services committees would be a valuable resource for child protection workers in making sure that parents understand the process and what is expected of them when they sign a plan of care agreement. This will be commented on later in this report.

Mr. Speaker, the committee would like assurances from the department that child protection workers are trained to be sensitive to the emotional state, and also be aware of the cultural factors, that may lead a person to decline needed translation services and, wherever there is doubt, err on the side of caution and provide translation services.

#### **Recommendation**

Mr. Speaker, the committee recommends that the existing practice of offering translation services be continued, and that child protection workers be required to take into account the emotional state and the cultural background of a person being offered translation services, and, when there is any doubt, provide the necessary translation services as a matter of course.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to ask the deputy chair of the committee, Mr. Yakeleya, to continue with the report. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Yakeleya.

#### **Use Of Non-Custodial Parent In Caring For Apprehended Child**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was another issue raised by Mr. Enge during his presentation on Bill 5. Mr. Enge pointed out that after a child is apprehended, a non-custodial parent must gain custody rights through family court before they would be considered as a care provider for their biological child. Mr. Enge believes that, in cases where the custodial parent is proven an unfit parent, the child protection workers need the discretionary power to place the child with the non-custodial parent, on a temporary or permanent basis, if they are suitable.

As it stands now, the act only contemplates returning a child who has been apprehended to the parent -- defined as the person with legal custody -- or to the person who had care of the child at the time of the apprehension. There is no specific mention of non-custodial parents.

The Member for Monfwi is dealing with a constituent, working at one of the mines on a two-week-in/two-week-out rotation, facing a similar situation. The constituent, whose child was apprehended and placed in foster care outside of the home community, was not afforded the opportunity to arrange care for his own biological child.

There is, of course, the assumption that the child has a relationship with the non-custodial parent before the child protection worker should consider such a placement as a priority over foster care within the community.

#### **Recommendation**

The committee recommends that the Minister examine the issue of involving non-custodial parents in caring for apprehended children and, if necessary, make the required legislative and regulatory changes to allow child protection workers the discretionary powers to place apprehended children with the non-custodial parent on a temporary basis, providing that it is in the best interest of the child.

Mr. Speaker, I return over the next portion of the report to Mr. Jackson Lafferty.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

#### **Role Of The Extended Family In Child Protection Matters**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the committee is appreciative that one of the results of the passage of Bill 5 will be the inclusion of a new clause in the preamble of the Child and Family Services Act that states "And whereas a child's extended family can often provide important supports in meeting the best interests of the child;".

A preamble to an act is important in that the preamble sets out the principles that will guide the application of the act.

Recognizing the role of the extended family in child protection matters is an important step and now we need to take the next steps to ensure that this important sentiment continues to be reflected in the day-to-day practices of the child protection workers.

During our hearing on Bill 5, in the community of Behchoko, we heard from Chief Leon Lafferty and his disappointment that Bill 5 did not specifically address the role of aboriginal families and did not take into account aboriginal traditions.

We also heard from elders, Mrs. Vernick Erasmus and Mr. Phillip Huskey, on the need to keep apprehended aboriginal children in their home communities, with their extended families, wherever possible.

Many members of the Social Programs committee have heard from constituents concerned about the placement of aboriginal children with non-aboriginal foster families, both in and outside of the community. Many of these constituents have pointed out that there are members of the child's extended families that are suitable and prepared to offer the child a stable and loving environment.

It is understood by the committee that the child protection worker already has the discretionary power to place an apprehended child with a member of the child's extended family and that this does occur in many cases.

Members were made aware of cases where this has not occurred. It is recognized that there are valid reasons, like a late night apprehension or the need to run background checks on members of the extended family, and that this sometimes means a child is placed in temporary foster care, outside of the extended family.

However, in cases where a child is unlikely to be returned to the custodial parent, and where there is no suitable non-custodial parent, there should be an onus on the child protection worker to place the child with a suitable member of the child's extended family in the child's home community, before any consideration is given to removing the child from the home community or placing an aboriginal child with a non-aboriginal foster parent.

### Recommendation

The committee recommends the Minister issue a directive reinforcing the use of extended families in the placement of apprehended children and that every effort be made to place children with extended family within the child's home community, before a child protection worker considers placement in a foster home in or outside of the child's home community.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pass it on to my colleague Mr. Braden. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the Assembly for missing my cue earlier.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It's okay.

### Child And Family Services Committees In The Community

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, the committee looked into the area of child and family services committees in communities. It is a sad commentary that only the community of Fort McPherson has taken advantage of provisions of the Child and Family Services Act, that allow for the community agreements and the formation of a child and family services committee.

A community agreement allows a community corporation to establish their own community standards, which, as long as they meet the minimum standards set out in the regulations, reflect the realities of life in the community and the standard of care for apprehended children. They can also establish community standards to reflect whether a child is in need of protection under all of the reasons outlined in section 7(3).

For example, Mr. Speaker, young children out late at night unsupervised in Yellowknife would be of concern to a child protection worker and the Yellowknife Child and Family Services Committee, if one existed. The same level of concern may not exist for the child protection worker and the child and family services committee in a smaller, isolated community, and they would be able to establish their own standards to deal with such circumstances.

A community child and family services committee, as previously referenced in this report, would be a valuable resource in helping child protection workers, who may not be familiar with the local customs and families, in placing apprehended children with suitable members of the child's extended family within the child's home community.

There are also provisions for a member of the child and family services committee to sit on each child's individual plan of care committee and provide their input to reflect community standards and culture. In addition, if the child protection worker is unable to get a plan of care agreement in place, they can turn to the chairperson of the committee for assistance. This allows greater opportunity for an agreement to be reached.

There are also provisions that the chairperson of the committee could be delegated the powers of a child protection worker and be allowed to apprehend a child in need of protection. Committee thought that, while not ideal, this may be a power that will encourage a community without a child protection worker or an RCMP presence to consider forming their own child and family services committee.

In questioning witnesses like Ms. Alana Mero and Ms. Denise Kurszewski, who appeared before committee during the hearings on Bill 5, it became apparent to Members that there was a buy-in on the child's individual plan of care committee and a general recognition that this works well in ensuring that the needs of the child are met and that parents are represented in the process.

However, Mr. Speaker, there seemed to be little knowledge of the ability of a community to enter into agreements and establish community child and family service committees. This was also reflected in the comments we heard in Behchoko.

All Members of this House are approached by communities and asked to help empower them to deal with their own problems. We can point to community justice committees as an example of community empowerment. The role of the community justice committees in delivering services and dispensing justice is evolving, and is being recognized through increased supports and funding by the Department of Justice.

The Social Programs committee pressed hard over the life of this Assembly to secure increased funding and supports for the community justice committees. While this battle is far from over, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that the issue of funding and supporting community justice committees is at least on the radar of the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my colleague, the Member for Nunakput, to continue to report.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee members are convinced that the Department of Health and Social Services, and its authorities, could be doing more to promote the formation of child and family services committees in the communities and that a more coordinated approach should be undertaken.

In reviewing material provided by the Minister, there appeared to be a push in 2003 to establish child and family services committees, with three communities expressing interest. Of those three communities, only the community of Fort McPherson went past the initial presentation and consultation and formed a child and family services committee in conjunction with the Tl'oondih Healing Society.

Since that time, there have been expressions of interest in the northern part of territory, and information has been supplied to the community of Paulatuk and to the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority.

Mr. Speaker, Members also wondered if, because the responsibility for administering the Child and Family Services Act is with the regional health and social services authorities, there might be some reluctance on their part to promote a process that may end up contributing to the overall debt that many of our health authorities face.

Regardless of any speculation on the part of committee as to the reasons there has been no uptake at the community level for forming child and family services committees, it is important to note that, as the Minister outlined in briefing notes provided to committee, the ability of communities to participate directly in decision-making regarding the protection of children is unique to the Northwest Territories. As far as the department knows, no other jurisdiction in the world allows community input in child protection matters.

The tools exist in legislation and regulation. It is clear to the committee that there is a need for the department and the authorities to allocate resources to develop and foster community empowerment through the development of child and family services committees.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends the Minister direct the department and authorities to continue with ongoing activities and to design an adequately resourced plan to develop child and family services committees in the communities and that this plan be presented to the Standing Committee on Social Programs as part of the 2009-2010 business plan review.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn it over to my honourable colleague Mr. Robert McLeod. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

#### Development And Support Of Foster Families

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The committee is very appreciative of the role that foster parents play in ensuring that children can grow and prosper in a caring environment. Enough cannot be said about the people that are willing to take children into their homes on a moment's notice. They are a vital part in the delivery of social services in the Northwest Territories and need to be recognized and supported as such.

Part of Supplementary Appropriation No. 1, 2007-2008 is \$1.011 million for increases to the basic maintenance rate and to increase the age of child rate. This will result in increases of up to \$18 per day in some communities for the basic maintenance rate, and for the age of child amount \$4 for children up to the age of five, \$3 for children up to the age of 12 and \$5 for children up to the age of 18.

These increases recognize the cost of living in our communities and also recognize the different costs associated with children of different ages.

The committee is sure that these increases will help cover the costs for existing foster families and possibly encourage some families who could not afford to continue at the existing rates.

It is not clear that there will be any effect on the number of foster homes in the NWT.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends the department work towards increasing the number of foster homes in the NWT and that a plan, complete with numbers of existing foster homes, targeted increases and required resources be presented to the Standing Committee on Social Programs as part of the 2009-2010 business plans.

#### Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, the committee would like to thank all those who spoke at our hearings and raised their concerns with the application of the Child and Family Services Act. We look forward to the government's response to this report.

#### Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends the government provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'd like to pass it back to the chair of our committee and the Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

#### Motion To Receive Committee Report 3-15(6) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That concludes the Report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on Matters Related to the Child and Family Services Act. Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Committee Report 3-15(6), be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-15(6) be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-15(6) moved into Committee of the Whole today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 3-15(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

#### ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

Colleagues, I would like to bring your attention to the gallery. Visiting us today is Ms. Phyla Fyten. She's the newly appointed assistant to the Commissioner, Mr. Anthony Whitford. Welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our colleague Mr. Braden is the chair of the AFS Interculture Program here in Yellowknife, and he has today invited a number of participants in that program to visit us in the Legislative Assembly. These are students who are visiting from other countries and attending school at Sir John Franklin. Mr. Speaker, the resident from Frame Lake who is here today -- at least temporarily from Frame Lake, he's actually from Denmark -- is Mr. Emil Madsen. He's hosted by Peter and Jenni Bannon.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not too often I get to recognize my constituency assistant, so I'd just like to take this time to recognize Sue-Ellen Wilson from Fort McPherson, who is my constituency assistant who has been here this week chaperoning the Pages. I'd also like to recognize a former constituent from Tsiigehtchic, Ms. Norwegian. She's just back from her studies in Winnipeg in regards to aboriginal

self-government, so I'd like to welcome her back to Yellowknife.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of people to recognize. The first one I'd like to recognize is Ms. Phila Fyten. She's a very involved constituent in our community. I, too, wish to acknowledge the AFS student living in the riding with Sue and Norm Glowach, and the young lady's name is Letizia Foracchia. I hope that's close enough. She's staying with Norm and Sue Glowach, who are a generous family, well-known for taking in many adventurous students through the AFS Program. So thank you to them and welcome.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to recognize our former Speaker from Fort Providence, Sam Gargan, and also a former resident of Fort Providence who got swept off her feet downstream and ended up in Tulita, Cheryl Yakeleya. I'd like to welcome them both, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Pages from Hay River South who have been serving in the Legislature this week: J.J. McKinney and Joseph Lirette. Also in the visitor's gallery today, Mr. Tom Lakusta and his son, Adam, and again my constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize two of the Pages from Norman Wells that are here to join us: Joel Erb and Kacee Hunter. They are both from Norman Wells Mackenzie Mountain School, and they did a fine job of looking after us.

---Applause

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the love of my life. I love you, hon, and she certainly swept me off my feet from the Deh Cho, because there was no bridge.

---Laughter

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize another student with the AFS Interculture Program, but also thank Mr. Braden for his volunteer work with this organization, hosted by the Wetmores in my constituency. There is Hiu Ying Lau. I

have been getting some coaching from Member Hawkins who tells me that Lai Hoa means hello. So, hello.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I appreciate the acknowledgement of my colleagues in the involvement that I have been very pleased to have with this exchange student. So it is certainly a pleasure to recognize Mr. Emil Madsen, Miss Letizia Foracchia and Miss Hiu Ying Lau. I would also like to recognize a resident of my constituency, at least on a temporary basis, Miss Jessica Monnaie, who is from Belgium, not an official exchange student but very much one of our community. She is staying with her aunt, Ms. Nancy Trotter. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not recognize another constituent and a very loyal companion of mine, my constituency assistant, Mr. John Argue.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. It is always nice to have an audience. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. Acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### ITEM 7: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mary Heron, a respected elder of the Salt River First Nations and a constituent who I have known since I was but a wee lad, has recently reached the important milestone of 80 years.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this important accomplishment and milestone will be celebrated this Sunday out at Fort Fitzgerald by family and friends. I would like to extend my congratulations to her and her family and wish Mary many more years of good health and happiness. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize and acknowledge the accomplishment of Ms. Liz Kuptana of Paulatuk. I understand Liz Kuptana, language and culture instructor at Angik School in Paulatuk, will be retiring as the language and culture instructor after 20 years of service.

Today, on behalf of the students and parents of Paulatuk, I would like to thank Ms. Kuptana on her dedication and keeping the strong tradition and instruction of the Inuvialuit language alive to the students of Angik School. I know she will be missed by the students of Angik School. In closing, I wish her well in her retirement, because she deserves it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**ITEM 8: ORAL QUESTIONS****Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Human Resources. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, members of the public service of the Government of the Northwest Territories are entitled and should expect that the information that they provide to their employer will be treated with respect and it will be kept private and used only for the purpose it is intended.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, May 15, 2007, I asked Minister Dent if there had been a breach of security of information of a private nature for members of the public service through the PeopleSoft program. The Minister said no. Today, again, I ask Minister Dent if there has been a breach of private information of GNWT employees from the PeopleSoft program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member noted earlier this week, I informed her that there had been no problems with information access of the PeopleSoft system after the implementation of self-service function for departments. However, since that time, I have been informed that there were some problems with the information access during the initial rollout of the program in some departments. These problems were dealt with quickly as soon as they were identified. Mr. Speaker, I intend to follow up with my department on this issue and determine how we can ensure that these types of issues do not arise again and I will report back to Members on the results of my inquiry. I would like to thank the honourable Member for bringing this issue to my attention. Mr. Speaker, I apologize for any miscommunication on my part.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I fully assume that when the Minister informed us that there had been no breach of information, was what was in his knowledge at that time. However, that raises other questions. Mr. Speaker, I called the Minister a month ago. Other Members called the Minister and inquired when we had begun to hear about this breach. Then I again asked, on the record in this House, and I thought that surely after asking in the public that somebody in the Minister's office or in the Minister's department would have taken the opportunity to set the record straight and have the Minister then correct that information the next day in the House. Even after I asked Minister Dent again last night, no attempt was made by anyone in his department to correct this misinformation. This is typical of the way the Human Resources treats members of the public service when it comes to their benefits, pensions, leaves, records of employment and now the security of the information that they provide to this government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister how it is that, after being inquired about this for over a month and then stating on the public record, that no one in the Minister's

department corrected the record? Did they not know? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I intend to follow up on this issue with some detail. Again, I will advise Members of what I am able to find out. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the Minister would treat this as a matter of some urgency and some importance. I think this shows great disrespect to our public servants if we do not do that. Mr. Speaker, I know that MLAs' information was included in there too, but I am not so concerned about that; I am concerned about the people in the public service who have had this information out there. I do not believe it was out there for a short period of time. I think it was out there for a three-week period. I would ask the Minister to check into that. I would be very interested in hearing back. I expect that there will be consequences for misinformation and the lack of information provided to the Minister on the part of the people in the Department of Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker, during this time of breach and during this time that there was access available to this information, is it possible that this information, including bank accounts, social insurance numbers, private home addresses, could have been downloaded? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that it was possible that this information could have been downloaded, but I will ascertain that and again make sure that that information is passed on to Members.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that information that should not have been available to all of the employees in the public service was available. It is important to note, too, that this wasn't a public breach. While it is right, the information should not have been available, I want to make sure that all employees understand that this information was not available on the Internet to the members of the public. Any information that was able to be seen was only by the people who had taken an oath of office. I know that isn't going to satisfy or mitigate the issue that this information was available, but I want to make sure that people understand this wasn't broadly available to the public. I don't believe that it was available for three weeks, at this point. I will, however, ensure that a very detailed review of this matter is taken. I have promised and will report to all Members on what I find.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister not being informed of this by people in his department is a great sign of disrespect for him, and disrespect for Members of this House, and disrespect for the public servants. I would like to ask the Minister, what is he prepared to do in the event of this information where he was allowed to stand up and publicly make a declaration in this House to me that there was no breach and not one person from his department called him to correct the record? What is he prepared to do about it? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 104-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we agree that this is a serious issue, the issue around access to the records and how the information has failed. We will look at that. I will report back to the Member.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Question 105-15(6): Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Just with what I mentioned earlier in my Member's statement, I just want to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation if his point of view is the same as mine, that elders know what is best for elders, especially in our smaller communities. The elders in the seniors' society in Fort Resolution went to great lengths to acquire property, get the Housing Corporation on side to move forward on an initiative of building a seniors' independent living six-plex and now it has been put on the back burner by the Housing Corporation. I just want to ask the Minister of Housing why all of a sudden there are some barriers put up by the regional office for the seniors to go out and seek more support letters from people they already had support letters from. Why is that happening, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 105-15(6): Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This project has not been put on the back burner. Mr. Speaker, it changed from some singles housing and some housing for families to a six-plex for seniors at the request of the seniors.

What that does, Mr. Speaker, because of the limited amount of housing, is it does limit the options for single people and for families and has housing dedicated for seniors. We asked the seniors whether in the event there weren't enough seniors to occupy all of the new six-plex units at some point in the future, would they make the units then available to other singles or couples based on a waiting list. Mr. Speaker, the Deninu Kue First Nation, the seniors' society and the community council all replied that this was not a problem for them. We are only waiting now

for the Fort Resolution Metis Council to give us the green light. I understand they are meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> and the project is a go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Supplementary To Question 105-15(6): Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to get back, I don't know if when the seniors went out, they researched properties that might have been available. They went to the landowner, they got them to get in contact with the Housing Corporation to build a six-plex. To me, it's always been a six-plex right from day one. This is part of the affordable housing initiative. The seniors did assure the Housing Corporation that we have a list of 97 seniors whose average age is 68 years old in the community. Many of them are waiting to get into the seniors' six-plex, so you can rest assured that there is always a long waiting list for that. Is the Minister's department going to start the...I am sure they have a letter from the Metis already confirming their support for the six-plex, so why do we have to again start circulating support letters back to the department when they already have the support letters in place to originally get this thing off the ground? Why do they need another letter from all these organizations, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 105-15(6): Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have pretty well everything in place. The only piece of information we don't have is agreement from the Metis council that in the event we don't have seniors to occupy the units, that they would agree to have the units occupied either by a single person or by a couple based on a waiting list, Mr. Speaker. So if we get that one piece of information so there is no misunderstanding down the road, and this project is ready to go. As I said, the meeting is being held next week and I don't see any reason for any delay beyond that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Supplementary To Question 105-15(6): Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to know they only need this one piece of information left, but I have to remind the Minister, when you are trying to get all these community organizations to come together to support something that seems like a good initiative for the community, it's always really difficult when you are talking about dollar allocations within the community. To go out there and start negotiating another round of negotiations and agreements with all these local organizations by the seniors' society, that just really puts a lot of strain on what they have already done. Can his department provide some support to the seniors' society in expediting the whole process and getting in touch with the Metis and saying we are just waiting for you guys, are you onside, is it a go? Can they do that for the seniors? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 105-15(6): Housing Complex For Deninu Kue Seniors**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions. The Metis have told us they are



meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup>, which is a week from today. They will give us that assurance.

Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to avoid is a situation we see in some communities where we have a seniors complex, it's only for seniors, and then we have empty units and then people looking for housing and they can't move into it because it's a seniors complex. We want to say let's be sensible about this, let's build it as a seniors unit, but if there are other people, make sure they can move in there too with priority given to the seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I will assure the Member that we expect to have a decision on the 24<sup>th</sup>. If there seems to be a problem with that, we will intervene and urge the Metis council to move this quickly. That's the only piece of information we need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement today, I spoke about the issue of recreational land availability around Yellowknife, in particular the Ingraham Trail. The issue, as I see it, needs to move forward and it's an important issue. I would like to direct my questions to the Premier because it involves multi levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier aware of any interim agreement or negotiations going on between DIAND, the Akaitcho, the GNWT to resolve the issue of squatters in and around Yellowknife because there is little enforcement and, further, is there any commitment he can make today to ensure that a process starts to engage the stakeholders with this problem? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak for DIAND, for the federal government, but from our government's perspective, in 2004 we tried to come to an agreement with the Akaitcho at the negotiating table to have a policy that deals with unauthorized use of land. Mr. Speaker, at that time, the proposal we put forward was rejected and we have not taken it back to the table again.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, through Municipal and Community Affairs, we continue to work towards a policy for use of land and, as Members may have noticed, there have been ads in the papers this week warning people are they breaking the law. Thank you.

**MS. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I see this issue clearly around the word respect. This is respect for First Nations land. This is respect for our environment. This is respect about the law. So if we don't deal with the trespassers, it's a serious issue. I have spoken to one of the local chiefs and he's concerned. I have spoken to some of the DIAND folks here and they are concerned. Would the Premier be willing to initiate

this, I think he called it a tabled situation. I'm sorry; I missed how he said it. Anyway, would he be willing to reinstate this process to get this discussion out there with the stakeholders so we can deal with it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was referring to trying to work with the Akaitcho negotiators, Akaitcho people, at the negotiation table. We tried that in 2004. It didn't go anywhere. So, Mr. Speaker, I am certainly open to having our negotiator consider raising this again when there is next a meeting at the table.

Mr. Speaker, beyond that, what we are prepared to do right now is put out enforcement procedures that we have worked out, give people warnings and give people notice that they have to show us that they have the right to be occupying the land they have. If they don't, then they are violating the law and will be dealt with accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Premier further outlining this process, but I would like to encourage him to not wait until the next table. We can probably deal with this as a side table issue because we have cottage country within reach of Yellowknife that we could get lawful people out there enjoying summer, enjoying winter, whatever the case may be. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain what enforcement means, because he just hinted that there would be some enforcement, and how will it be monitored. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members have noticed, we have put out notices in the newspapers. It's also on the community channel, on the green...(inaudible)...we want people to know that if they are building something or they have something out there, they are going to have to show us that they have the right to be there. Mr. Speaker, we have started that.

Mr. Speaker, we will be posting notices on property where we are not able to identify someone with a lease or a title. We have to follow a process in there giving proper notice. Of course, it varies whether we find out who the owner or the occupant is. We will follow through with that. Where it is abandoned, again there is a process we have to follow to deal with structures that have been abandoned and there is need for clean up of those. Mr. Speaker, I won't go into all the steps, but there is a procedure laid out that is very clear and we have developed that in cooperation with the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say in closing, that we do want and hope to have the cooperation of the Akaitcho people as well as we begin the procedures of managing this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just for clarity here, I am going to go back, although I have asked for it, I just want to be sure that we are on the same page. Would the Premier be willing to go out and speak to the Akaitcho folks and even place a phone call to the DIAND folks who are in charge of this area and strike up this meeting? The talks I have had with these individuals, they are ready and very interested in dealing with this problem. Would the Premier agree to do that today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 106-15(6): Recreational Land Availability Around Yellowknife**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if I will have a chance to do it today...

---Laughter

...but, Mr. Speaker, I will and we have committed to consulting with the Akaitcho and letting them know what we are doing in terms of the enforcement procedures. Hopefully we will have cooperation there.

Mr. Speaker, I also hope that DIAND will also follow a similar process as we are on their land because, Members know, we can only develop procedures and apply our legislation on Commissioner's land. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**Question 107-15(6): Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for Mr. Dent, the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities. Mr. Speaker, it's long been recognized that our disabilities and income support policies can prevent some significant barriers to families wishing to care for long-term disabled family members in their homes. We have had two initiatives underway for quite some time; several years, Mr. Speaker. These include the disabilities framework and the government-wide income security reform review. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise whether either of these initiatives will address the barriers that exist in our policies to providing and assisting families with long-term care for disabled members in their homes? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 107-15(6): Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By September of this year, the Income Support Program will be changed to provide a better level of support for persons with disabilities. We are also looking at changes that will accommodate some of the issue that the Member has talked about in terms of long-term planning for families who have youngsters with disabilities in a similar vein to the approach taken by the federal government recently. So, yes, Mr. Speaker, that's underway. I am hoping in June to be able to announce the specifics of some of the changes we hope to implement in September.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 107-15(6): Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's very good news and I know a lot of families will be looking forward to hearing about this next month. Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned children and perhaps I missed something in his reply but I would like to confirm, are we also going to be acknowledging or accommodating adults, Mr. Speaker, who can sometimes find themselves in situations where they are perhaps as helpless as children but still warrant and can be provided the support of families? Will we be acknowledging the situations for disabled adults, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 107-15(6): Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are planning to change the focus of the Income Support Program from one of a program of last resort, to one that looks at what are the needs of an individual and a person who is disabled needs an ability to participate in society. They have different needs than somebody who is able bodied and perhaps just in between jobs. So the focus of the program is going to be significantly different. I believe we will be able to significantly improve on the supports that we are providing. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 107-15(6): Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will these reforms enable families who are able to tap into our support system and provide that kind of long-term support in their homes as opposed to having to look perhaps only at institutions as their only real options? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 107-15(6): Support Systems For Persons With Disabilities**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the big changes we are proposing with the Income Security Program is a focus on bringing more than one department together to work with individuals; case management, if you will. Some of the level of support that might be required by some of the individuals in our system wouldn't necessarily be available through one department. They may not all be available to changes through the Income security Program, but perhaps by case management working with Health and Social Services and the Income Support Program and the Housing Corporation, we may be able to find ways to more adequately deal with people who up until now have been slipping through the cracks. That's the overall goal of the change that we are proposing to bring forward in September.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Question 108-15(6): Contracts For Housing Construction Materials**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for

the Housing Corporation and it's with regard to the current practice of the Housing Corporation when it comes to having new houses built in communities where they've moved over to what they call commodity packaging and it has to be for all the communities on the road system. If you want to bid, you have to bid on all the windows for the houses in all the communities or the doors or the framing as opposed to supply and build in the community. In my community of Fort Smith, it puts the local building supplier at a distinct disadvantage in competing against the large companies like Igloo which now has its main plant and factory in Edmonton. I just wanted to ask the Premier, is there any flexibility or ways that there will be a more level playing field as it was in the old days, even when it was supply and erect? The building supplier had access to bidding through the local contractors. In this case, they are cut out of the opportunity because they are not big enough to compete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 108-15(6): Contracts For Housing Construction Materials**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation, over the years, has gone to great expense to try to deliver the housing in a way that is affordable, but is also done so that northern businesses have maximum opportunity to benefit from it. That's why in some cases we do the supply, ship and erect where it's all to one person. In some cases, it's labour only and we supply the material and in other cases, it's a combination of those.

Mr. Speaker, I am open to looking at how we do this in a way that is going to meet those smaller companies the Member is referring to that can't compete with the big companies yet want to benefit from this and do it in a way that keeps the price affordable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Supplementary To Question 108-15(6): Contracts For Housing Construction Materials**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Premier indicate how he would see or be able to deal with this circumstance? Would it be a case of the building supply owner to contact the president or what would the Premier suggest? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 108-15(6): Contracts For Housing Construction Materials**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I haven't had the opportunity to discuss this at any great extent yet with the president, but I will. I would certainly encourage the company involved to talk to the president and see if there is another creative way of doing this. It may be that there are enough units, for example, in a community that we could look at a different way of doing it where a local established business would be able to put in a reasonable price. Mr. Speaker, I would commit to speaking with the president and ask the company concerned to also do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the project of the magnitude of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline continues to be a topic. Now I hear that there is a meeting going on in Ottawa. I would like to direct my questions today to Premier Handley. I would like to ask the Premier if he or the government was aware that this meeting was going on in Ottawa between the proponents and the Government of Canada. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say we have gone, again, a long way to saying to the federal government and the proponent that we want to be in the room when there are discussions going on, the results of which we may inherit at some point. Mr. Speaker, we were not aware that this meeting was happening, although we knew generally that these kind of discussions would be taking place at some time in the future. But in reference to the meeting that took place, we did not know of that specific meeting, Mr. Speaker. That is of concern to us.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that. I hope it doesn't go to show the importance Ottawa places on our government or lack of it. I would like to ask the Premier if he's communicated to them his disappointment that we are not in the room at the meeting. On something that is so important to the Northwest Territories, we have to be there. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our officials have insisted we be there. This one happened, we didn't know and, as I say, that is of great concern to us. Assuming we have devolution and resource revenue sharing at some point, this is a concern to the people of the North.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, yes, either I will or the Minister of Finance will again say to Ottawa that you can't just give us lip service on this, you have to follow through and let us know these meetings are there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the meeting, my understanding, is on Ottawa being offered equity into the project. I would like to ask the Premier if this government would be able to, if offered, take an equity share in the pipeline. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, if we had a nice big fat bank account, we might consider that as being a good investment. Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, we don't have the resources to be able to buy into this multi-billion dollar project. Mr. Speaker, our position has been to support the Aboriginal Pipeline Group and others in the North to get an ownership. I hope the federal government, if they are considering an equity position, that they consider doing that on behalf of people in the North. The Aboriginal Pipeline Group, to me, would be the logical choice at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have commended the good work of the Aboriginal Pipeline Group because they are trying to ensure that we get some benefit out of this pipeline that's going right through our territory. I would like to ask the Premier, he said we don't have the resources. We have the resources, the only thing is Ottawa has got them in their bank account and it's our money. Would the Premier ask the Government of Canada for a 50 percent equity that they are trying to get into the pipeline with our money? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 109-15(6): Role Of GNWT In Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Projects**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we have to conclude a resource revenue sharing deal.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, it is our money that is coming out of here. The federal government has it and now are looking at an equity position with our money. That's why, Mr. Speaker, short of having a deal, we are sitting here being frustrated because other people are talking about how to spend our money.

Mr. Speaker, I would not want our government to be in a position where it's competing with the Aboriginal Pipeline Group or aboriginal business or any business in the North. So our first priority, Mr. Speaker, would be to have northern businesses own the equity shares of these kind of projects rather than us as a government get into it. Who knows how the negotiations will go? It may come to that at some point where we own a share. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources and it gets back to my Member's statement from earlier where I mentioned again the fact that since 1999, the size of the public service has gone from 3,700 to over 5,500 employees. That's 1,800 positions in seven years, Mr. Speaker. Four years of this government and reactionary position growth, four years of having no human resource plan, strategy or vision. Four years of no consideration of the impact self-government will have on our human resource needs going into the future. I have some why

questions, Mr. Speaker. The first one is why, after four years, this government has not got a comprehensive human resource strategy. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would agree with the Member that the best practice would be for the government to have a corporate human resource plan. In fact, the department has prepared a broad, high level plan to take to deputies here within the next two months. So we are hoping to move forward with that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. So I guess that's an admission that for the past four years, we have just plodded along plugging positions in, reacting to certain things without a plan. That's why we continue, like I said, through budget after budget, supp after supp, to approve new positions, because we do not have a plan and somebody on that side is responsible. Cabinet is responsible for the fact of the matter and that is we don't have a plan. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for HR why there has been no work done specifically in the area of self-government and what that will mean for the future needs of our public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member says that we haven't had any plans. In fact, when departments come forward through the business plan process to say here is what we need in order to implement the projects and the goals that the Legislative Assembly has set, that is some part of the plan for human resources. So each department has, up until now, been working at developing their own HR plan. The departments of Health and Social Services and FMBS have done detailed ones in concert with Human Resources and HR has made the offer to other departments to do more detailed ones with them. This Assembly is the oversight for position growth and each position that we have in the budget is approved by the Members of this Assembly in order to get the job done that they want to see done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister brings up a good point and that is the departments are responsible for forwarding business plans with positions attached to these business plans. Mr. Speaker, therein lies the problem. There is no coordination. This leads to duplication and a lack of coordination. That's why we scramble on big files like the pipeline, we scramble on other files. I would like to ask the Minister when are we going to have a comprehensive human resource plan for the Government of the Northwest Territories? When will that happen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, both Health and Social Services and FMBS have those comprehensive plans now. An overall broad government plan can't be comprehensive. It's going to have to be the broad brush strokes, the high level plan, because you can't say that all departments are going to work exactly the same way. So we want to set up some general criteria and say to the deputies, can your department work within this and then have each department work on their own detailed plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One last question and it gets back to the fact that aboriginal governments are settling land claims in the Northwest Territories. They are proceeding through implementation of these claims. Mr. Speaker, you would think that the size of the public service for the Government of the Northwest Territories would be going down, not going up. I would like to ask the Minister specifically, and this is a specific question specifically on aboriginal self-government, what has the government done in the past four years that would show that it's concerned at all about the impact self-government will have on our future human resource needs and how we can devolve positions to the regions? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 110-15(6): Need For A Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been extensive work done by human resources and FMBS over the past four years to look at this issue. It's a topic that's come up to the Cabinet table many times and we are working with the self-government negotiating teams at the tables to try to help them understand some of the issues surrounding taking over the positions. If a self-government entity is going to take on the delivery of a function, they are likely going to be looking at taking on the personnel. So we have been working on that and we have worked with the people at the table, both the federal government and self-government entities, to make sure people are aware of the issues that will arise.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**Question 111-15(6): Summer Student Employment Opportunities**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources and it's with regard to the summer student employment. Mr. Speaker, since the Minister made a statement a few days ago about the status of the summer student situation and the questions I asked yesterday or the day before about the fact that there appears to be a lot less summer students being hired this year than in previous years, I have received more phone calls from parents who really feel that this government is reducing the number of student jobs available. The Minister is indicating that that is not the case. So I would have to surmise from that that

there is a gap in communication going on. Would the Minister make a commitment to undertake with his Human Resources personnel again and put some emphasis and extra resources into it, and go through all the departments and see what jobs are available, go through the list of students who are still looking for jobs, because they are numerous, and make every effort possible to find a job for these students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 111-15(6): Summer Student Employment Opportunities**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Subsequent to the Member's first question on this issue, I met with the deputy and we have work started already to follow up with departments to find out what positions they are going to have and to find out whether or not there are going to be any fewer positions going to be offered this year compared to previous years.

As well, we have summer students who are employed in Human Resources actually phoning and contacting students this week, it started this week, to ensure that they are still looking for work and to find out if they have been contacted by departments. So we have started that work already, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to do that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 111-15(6): Summer Student Employment Opportunities**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated in previous questions that the job recruitment process is ongoing and the time and the nature of summer student jobs vary and so students could get hired throughout the summer, but I think May is an important month and most students would want to be hired by the end of May. So could I ask the Minister to make a commitment to get back to us by the end of the month and give us a results report in that regard?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 111-15(6): Summer Student Employment Opportunities**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to update Members on a regular basis, not just one time at the end of the month. I will do it again in June and let Members know what has been happening with summer student employment. As the Member mentioned, one of the points I had made earlier is that there are varying lengths of jobs. A lot of departments look only for summer students to fill in for people who are on leave. So they look for summer students for an eight to 10-week period more than for the longer periods. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 111-15(6): Summer Student Employment Opportunities**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think there is a need for the government to do more and do everything we can to create job opportunities for summer students while they are here. It enhances their work experience as well as giving them extra resources that they could use to go to school, which is very important. Could I ask the Minister to vamp it up a little bit and get

more proactive and ask the departments to look for opportunities. If they have money in the budget to spend, if they could create jobs to make sure as many students are hired as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 111-15(6): Summer Student Employment Opportunities**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, when I met with the deputy for Human Resources, I asked that she talk to the other deputies to encourage them to ensure that the departments were hiring summer students as much as possible. We will continue that work, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier in my Member's statement about the region in terms of catching up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This issue I want to talk about is one example of the government catching up to the Sahtu in terms of services. I want to talk about the medevac services. Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding a decision of this government not to split the medevac contracts between regions as they have done in previous contracts for this type of service for our region. The reason, we were told, was to save money. How much money was saved compared to the previous contract that was split when we had this service in our region? The history is there. It shows the value of having the service in our region. Why hasn't it been done in the last contract? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

**Return To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of the medevac contract is one that the government has looked at for quite some time. Not in the previous contracts, but a number of contracts ago, the government decided to pool the area of medevac contracts trying to limit the exposure as it was one of the areas that was growing substantially. So we've gone to this method of one contract for the medevac itself. That's the flights and planes. Then another for medevac personnel. We found even our health centres and hospitals were unable to have staff taken out of their facilities. That would cause other shortages within the day-to-day operations. So we have structured in this way: one for cost-effectiveness and still trying to meet the timelines as we talked about with medevacs and getting people into our health facilities. It's an area we focussed on. I don't have the current dollar savings from year to year. It would be difficult because costs have grown over the years substantially, but I think we can show that doing it this way has been more efficient as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister if he could make a commitment to convince me that this was the most cost-effective way. We are talking about people's lives, Mr. Speaker. It takes two,

three or four hours to get into our communities on a good day. On a bad day, it may be six or eight hours. We are talking about people's lives. So I am asking the Minister, the Minister said there is no personnel in terms of the type of service we have in the Sahtu and that the cost is too much. How much is too much, Mr. Speaker, in terms of our people's lives? There has never been a request of an RFP on this service that could not have been identified in terms of the cost of having the service in the Sahtu region. Would the Minister tell me the reasons why?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact is the way we've changed the service and it's provided for now has worked. We managed to get into the communities when called upon. Yes, there are a number of communities, not only in the Sahtu but other regions in the territory, where a flight has to go out of one of the two centres. The way the RFP has been structured, we would have one plane situated up in Inuvik that would be dedicated to the service, as well as out of Yellowknife that would reach the other communities. So a lot of communities would have to wait for a flight to be dispatched from one of those two centres. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I ask about the services in the Sahtu. Take a Twin Otter from Yellowknife, fly it up to Colville Lake, it's a short runway. It takes a good four or five hours. There is no nurse in Colville Lake. Take a plane out of Inuvik and also fly into Colville Lake. You had services in Norman Wells. Fly over those mountains into Colville Lake, pick up the person, bring him into Norman Wells and fly him out to either Inuvik or Yellowknife. You are talking about lives here, Mr. Speaker. So my question is why are the bulk of medevac flights out of Yellowknife? This is backwards. Aircraft should be based where medevac is originating from. People from Yellowknife can just drive to the hospital. If aircraft were based in a regional centre such as Norman Wells, our response would be cut in half. If an RFP changes to reflect this theory, what would it cost in terms of having these major centres to have this type of service? I would ask the Minister, would he look at having this type of service in the Sahtu region as is in other regions? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the record, I should state the fact that the RFP has been out there, the time for the RFP has closed, at the end of April '07, and the evaluation is undergoing and will be awarded very soon. I am sure that the department has done the evaluation. I haven't got the latest news on that. So we are going with the RFP that has been established. It has worked for us and we're looking at continuing on with that practice. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many stories. I have a letter from the Yamoga Land Corporation president; I have a letter from the Deline Land Corporation; I have a signature from the chief of Deline in terms of asking the government to consider. I know what the Minister is saying in terms of an RFP going out. They're saying consider having this service in the Sahtu. Why can't we, if the successful bidder is from Yellowknife or Inuvik, have an aircraft based on the Sahtu region? Why do they have to be based in Inuvik or Yellowknife? Why not have it in our region? This is what my people are asking for this service here. Lives are at stake, Mr. Speaker. In this day and age, I think that should be more than the cost-effectiveness of how we run this government here. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 112-15(6): Regional Medevac Contract**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cost effectiveness has to come into play at some point, because if it absolutely fails, it will fail everyone. So I mean that's something we have to keep in mind. The fact is, as I stated, this is not unique just to the Sahtu; it happens in other regions. We've had to try to make a balance of how we operate, how we can function and ensure patient safety. For example, as the Member has highlighted -- and it is a concern to a lot of the communities and regions -- but location of the base stations, as I've highlighted, does come into play when we review this. The ability to maintain and support medevac personnel, because that plays a role in how we function, and the ability to support the flight personnel is another factor that has to play into this. But, Mr. Speaker, there was no inability or the fact that there could have been a partnership formed or part of the RFP could have been a part there that highlighted this as a potential option and it would have been reviewed. I'm not sure if that was done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. Honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have further questions for the Minister responsible for Human Resources on this breach of confidential information that was held on employees' files. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister acknowledges this is a very serious situation. When I questioned him in the House about it before when he repeatedly denied that it had occurred, he responded to the issue of a protocol to notify the people affected, and I quote from unedited Hansard: "I don't know what the exact protocol would be, but you can be assured that we would consider it to be a very serious event and one that we would follow up on." I'd like to ask the Minister responsible today, does he know what the protocol is for notifying employees whose private information has been accessed on the PeopleSoft program? What is the protocol? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for HR, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that there is a protocol in place for advising people of the fact that if someone who maybe didn't have authority to see all of their information saw it. It is an issue that needs to be followed up on, I agree with the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot believe that given the amount of electronic information that this government deals with, our very expensive money that we've invested in PeopleSoft software and programming, that, my goodness, there would be no protocol established for a breach of that system. The Minister says he's going to get to the bottom of that and he also says he's going to get to the bottom of what actually happened. You know, I'm not that assured by that, given the fact that for over a month those same people in that department couldn't even inform him that there had been a breach and now he's going to talk to those same people to establish a protocol, and he's going to talk to those same people to find out what happened. I think we need some independent help, maybe from the Protection of Privacy and Information Commissioner. I'm not sure from whom, but I would suggest we need some objective outside resources on this one. Does the Minister agree? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will review the situation with the Premier and discuss what might be an appropriate response. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking of the Premier, I understand it is the Premier who is responsible for the appointment of deputy ministers, and I would be very glad to hear the Premier is going to be involved in this, and I'm sure the people in the public service will be glad to hear that the Premier will be involved in this as well. Like I said, at this moment, I'm not feeling real assured about trying to get the information of these same people who weren't forthcoming with the information, with something as serious as a breach, for over a month. So I would like the Minister's response to the idea of an outside, objective, independent look at this situation. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I'll discuss the issue with the Premier and my Cabinet colleagues, and review the situation and we will make an appropriate response. I don't want to commit to anything without having all of the details, all of the background that I can get. Mr. Speaker, I'll ensure, though, that Members are kept informed of what process we embark on. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker, and thank you that Members will be kept informed, but what about the members of the public service whose information has been put out there? Their privacy has been violated; their privacy has been breached. So thank you for keeping Members of this House informed. What are we going to do to inform the members of the public service, whose information, their private information, their social insurance number, their bank account numbers, has been out there for a period of time, whether it was for two hours or three weeks or whatever it turns out to be? What about them? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 113-15(6): Security Breach Of GNWT PeopleSoft Human Resources System**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a good point and we will make sure that we report to our employees on what happened, why it happened, how it happened, and what our response is and what will happen in the future. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**Question 114-15(6): Transportation Routes To The Slave Geological Province**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. My questions this afternoon are for Mr. Menicoche, the Minister for Transportation. Mr. Speaker, there are two visionary projects in play right now to open up the diamond fields and other mineral areas north and east of Yellowknife to more secure transportation. The Bathurst Inlet port and road proposal, which would bring things in via the Arctic Ocean marine route, and, of course, the Tibbet to Contwoyto seasonal winter road project. Both have significant ramifications for our economy; both will require significant public and/or private investment. It is likely, though, that perhaps only one will make it, at least in the near future. Mr. Speaker, which one does the GNWT prefer?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

**Return To Question 114-15(6): Transportation Routes To The Slave Geological Province**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; there are two important

initiatives largely driven by the private sector. As a government, we're interested, of course, in their development. The Bathurst Inlet port is largely driven by the government and supported by the Government of Nunavut. Kitikmeot Corporation and Nuna Logistics are proposing that and they expect to file a draft environmental impact statement later on this fall. As well in the news, the joint venture is looking at upgrading their roads to the mines. I think there's another 100 kilometres they want to get a seasonal operating road. Both are very viable projects, Mr. Speaker, and the government is supportive of both. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 114-15(6): Transportation Routes To The Slave Geological Province**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the significance of these, does it not make sense, is there no kind of process underway or at least under contemplation, Mr. Speaker, that would involve Nunavut, Canada, us and industry to assess these and make some long-term decisions that will work for us? Is there a process underway that we can participate in, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Menicoche.

**Further Return To Question 114-15(6): Transportation Routes To The Slave Geological Province**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the Department of Transportation, working with our Department of ENR, will be monitoring the developments of the environmental impact statement that will be filed, and certainly take part to ensure the GNWT interests are considered at that point. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Braden, supplementary.

**Supplementary To Question 114-15(6): Transportation Routes To The Slave Geological Province**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what I'm hearing is we're going to take a neutral stand on these projects; we're not going to evaluate them for their relative merits and then seek out one that we can support. So I guess my question is, are we going to be standing on the sidelines as the two projects develop, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Menicoche.

**Further Return To Question 114-15(6): Transportation Routes To The Slave Geological Province**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we are working with the joint venture group, who are the proponents, actually the ones that are considering both routes, and working along with them. Certainly the road mining transportation alternative study that they had released in April 2007 does recommend the best short-term solution is the one that runs the southern portion of the ice road, which is the southern part. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Thank you, Mr. Braden. Colleagues, before I go to the next Member, I'd like to draw your attention to two young ladies in the Chamber that have been paging for us from my riding: Hilary Aldridge and Frankie Ranger.

---Applause



Oral questions. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 115-15(6): Slogan For Territorial Licence Plates**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, may I remind Members, back in 1999, the GNWT split into two and Nunavut became their own territory. But, Mr. Speaker, since that time, we continue to share the same licence plate. Mr. Speaker, our licence plate, as well as theirs, says "Explore Canada's Arctic." I wrote a letter to the Minister of Transportation to say is this relevant, does this need to be looked at? I've also talked to the NWT Tourism Association and they think it's an important issue to at least examine and discuss. Can I ask the Minister of Transportation what has he done on this matter as of yet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

**Return To Question 115-15(6): Slogan For Territorial Licence Plates**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, my honourable friend, MLA from Yellowknife Centre, did enquire about changing the slogan on the licence plates. Working with the NWT Tourism, they do have a new branding strategy and they are recommending the term "spectacular." Our existing slogan, "Explore Canada's Arctic," we have been using that for some time. It was at that time as well, Mr. Speaker, it was recommended at that time, too, by the NWT Tourism Association and again they're recommending a change and that's something that we're prepared to look at. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 115-15(6): Slogan For Territorial Licence Plates**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister could expand what we're prepared to look at means, because I hope he would go to some type of public discussion, potentially even a competition, but I would certainly like to make sure that he engages our tourism industry partners on this issue. Is he willing to go out to some kind of discussion? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Menicoche.

**Further Return To Question 115-15(6): Slogan For Territorial Licence Plates**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that a great deal of market research has gone into the selection of a new slogan "spectacular" by the NWT Tourism Association, and we continue to express our support in changing the slogan to reflect the NWT Tourism new branding strategy. Right now, we're currently working with the Tourism Association in investigating the cost and timing of the launch of this new plate, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 115-15(6): Slogan For Territorial Licence Plates**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's actually good news, because when I brought the Minister

the phrase "spectacular" to line up with the NWT Tourism initiative, I was quite in favour of it, but I was a little hesitant to suggest it had to be that one, only because I thought a lot of discussion would have to go into this. Could the Minister explain, or possibly highlight, when he expects a new campaign to launch this will take place? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Menicoche.

**Further Return To Question 115-15(6): Slogan For Territorial Licence Plates**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, we are working with NWT Tourism to look at launching the plates. I can't really give an exact date. There are other issues involved here, too. We do have a large stock of the old plates that we wish to...That is a consideration. But we continue to work with the affected groups, and we're very supportive of it and would like to launch a new plate as well. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**ITEM 9: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**Written Question 12-15(6): Protected Areas Strategy**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is for the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

The Protected Areas Strategy and the Mackenzie Valley five-year action plan provides a blueprint for establishing a network of ecologically and culturally significant areas in advance of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. There have been some successes, but we are not moving fast enough.

1. Please provide a detailed account of activities that the Government of the Northwest Territories has done to encourage the federal government to expediently approve the interim land withdrawal application for the Ramparts, extend the withdrawal for Edehzhie, and approve the other outstanding NWT interim land withdrawal requests.
2. Please provide any correspondence on the timeline for when these approvals/extensions are to be completed.
3. Please provide a detailed account of the activities this government has undertaken to ensure that a portion of the \$10 million federal budget allocation for protected areas in the NWT will come to the GNWT to create or expand protected areas in the NWT, including, but not limited to, the mechanism through which the GNWT can receive a portion of the budget allocation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

**ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 31-15(6): Workers' Compensation Board Of The NWT And Nunavut 2007 Corporate Plan**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document Workers'

Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut 2007 Corporate Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Tabling of documents. Honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

**Tabled Document 32-15(6): Letter From Gameti Chief Henry Gon To Monfwi MLA Jackson Lafferty Regarding Delays In Construction Of The Gameti School Extension**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a signed letter from Chief Gon from Gameti on a concern on the school extension for Gameti School. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. Honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**ITEM 17: MOTIONS**

**Motion 6-15(6): Extended Adjournment Of The House, Carried**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on May 17, 2007, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, August 15, 2007;

AND FURTHER that any time prior to August 15, 2007, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Motion 8-15(6): Commitment To The Deh Cho Bridge, Carried**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Deh Cho Bridge project is no longer expected to be self-financing and will require ongoing investment by the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has not committed to infrastructure funding for the Deh Cho Bridge project;

AND WHEREAS the potential impacts of the Deh Cho Bridge on the cost of living for Yellowknife, the Tlicho communities and the Akaitcho communities are unclear;

AND WHEREAS the exact cost of financing the Deh Cho Bridge to the Government of the Northwest Territories has not been provided to Regular Members;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government not enter into a binding agreement committing it to the Deh Cho Bridge project until it has provided Regular Members with:

- an up-to-date analysis of the expected cost of living impacts of the bridge on Yellowknife, the Tlicho communities and the Akaitcho communities;
- the estimated social impacts and economic benefits for the community of Fort Providence; and
- the exact total cost of the Deh Cho Bridge to the Government of the Northwest Territories;

and given Regular Members an opportunity to comment on whether the bridge should proceed based on this information.

Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. Honourable Member for Kam Lake, Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. This is an issue that has garnered much discussion amongst Members of this House over the past week and a half since we've been back in the House, Mr. Speaker, and I want to be clear, and state again for the record, that in no way am I opposed to a bridge across the Mackenzie River at Fort Providence. That's not the onus of this motion. The onus of this motion, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the project has changed. It has changed tremendously. It has gone from a self-financing model five years ago to one that will now need an additional at least \$2 million more in government funds on a yearly basis to proceed.

This motion is about transparency, Mr. Speaker. It's about accountability; it's about moving things forward by working together, and I do have some concerns on how exactly the bridge project jumped the queue for priorities of the government. It's interesting how that happens when we've never had a debate in this House in the four years I've been here on what are the big infrastructure priorities here. We've never had the debate. There are so many competing interests out there, like the Mackenzie Valley highway, chipsealing of Highway No. 5, the road to gravel source 177 near Tuk, the extension of Highway No. 4 to Gordon Lake, the Tuk-Inuvik highway. There are a number of competing priorities out there. There are a number of competing priorities out there, Mr. Speaker. Why the urgency to move this forward right now?

Mr. Speaker, I'll be clear on this: All along, in the three and a half years, that loan guarantee to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation has been increased four or five times. Every time the government would come back to Regular Members saying we've got to get some federal money to get this bridge to go ahead, there has to be federal money. So, Mr. Speaker, it was very surprising when the Premier announced in his sessional statement that the bridge was going to go ahead.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Very strange.

**MR. RAMSAY:** It was odd and it left a lot of questions unanswered. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate, I really do appreciate the fact that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation is in negotiations. Those numbers, those details are secret right now. But what this motion does, Mr. Speaker, is it asks the government, before they enter into any agreement that's going to bind the next government and every government for 35 years after that to spending public funds, it should come back here, it should show us what the potential impact is on the cost of living in Yellowknife, the Tlicho communities and the Akaitcho

communities; it should also show us what the total cost is going to be of this bridge.

Mr. Speaker, we've never had a debate and that's the sad reality of this. This government, the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, has never had a debate about a Deh Cho Bridge, not since I've been here. Hopefully this motion today will get out there, it will allow Members to stand up to talk about the Deh Cho Bridge, and that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker. We're here, these are public funds, we need to have some accountability, it needs to be as transparent a transaction as it possibly can be.

I would encourage Members to support this motion. Again, it doesn't say don't build the bridge. It says when you're done negotiations, come back to us. Let us see what we are getting ourselves into. I don't think that's too much to ask, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I'll close with these opening comments. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am going to support this motion here, as Mr. Ramsay has indicated, in terms of having some transparency in this government in terms of having some discussion. I, too, see the benefits of the Deh Cho Bridge being built across the Mackenzie River, as I also have aspirations for a Great Bear River bridge being built across our land, and other bridges that need to be built down the Mackenzie Valley here.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, was quite amazed how this project received quite a lot of attention in the last couple of weeks. I know we have gotten some other briefings in some other rooms on this project here, and the reason for this is it's all of a sudden we're deciding to build it. Well, we in the smaller communities are asking for special initiatives to be built in our regions such as other programs we could list off, but, Mr. Speaker, that's not the point here. The point is that we want some open, transparent discussions on mega projects. This is not just Fort Providence or areas around Yellowknife. This is a Northwest Territories project. When you look at projects down the Mackenzie Valley, in the Gwich'in or the Beaufort-Delta or the Sahtu, we seem to have that, well, it's a territorial project, we have to have some discussion. This one is a P3 project that's being negotiated with the community of Fort Providence under the corporate act that gives them some legal authority, legal powers, to work on this. But it's a Northwest Territories project, also. Mr. Speaker, the things I'd like to look at is if you change the physical landscape of the Mackenzie River, you know you change the people, you change the way of life, and this bridge here will certainly do that to the people in Fort Providence who are on ground zero. What are some of the things we could look out for them in terms of if this is a project that is being built in one of our small communities, are we preparing ourselves for this community, because it's at ground zero, for lots of social impacts, for the economic benefits that would come off this project? It's just like any other projects I have witnessed in our region. There are good impacts and then there are also some negative impacts in the region. So that's the thing I wanted to ask this government here in terms of how are we preparing the people and the way of life. I mean there are things in there that said they have the environmental and the water licence approved, but the way of life for the people on the river here. So those things I want to look at, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that I heard from the Members here is in terms of the break-up of the Mackenzie River and how it puts some hardships onto some of the people outside the area that use the ferry, such as the city of Yellowknife and Providence and some of the Tlicho communities, even the areas around the Nahendeh. Our communities in the Sahtu are isolated pretty well, in terms of that type of transportation, for about eight months. We just don't seem to have a priority to have them catch up to the other regions in terms of this type of infrastructure. There's lots of things we could do, so I'm very surprised as to how this project got bumped right up without any type of secure commitment from the federal government and we're going to pay one way or another.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a good debate on this. Like Mr. Ramsay has indicated, we need some good debate, we need some good discussions on this in the House as a whole, otherwise these projects would go under the radar if we didn't catch them in time to say let's have some open discussion on this project.

#### **Motion To Amend Motion 8-15(6), Carried**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an amendment to Motion 8-15(6). I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Motion 8-15(6) be amended by adding the words "and the general public" immediately after the words "until it has provided Regular Members" in the resolution to this motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the amendment. The honourable Member from Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the amendment to add include the general public, I think it's important that adding the amendment will include transparency not only to our Members on this side and to Members on that side, but also to all the people in the Northwest Territories with regard to the Deh Cho Bridge project. So I think, Mr. Speaker, that adding this amendment will give transparency, like I say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the amendment. The honourable Member from Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to mention to the amendment here, by adding the general public, to my knowledge there has not been a general public information session on the Deh Cho Bridge since 2003 in Yellowknife. Now I'm not sure exactly about other communities like in Behchoko or Lutselk'e or any of the other communities in the North Slave region, but that hasn't happened. So I think it's important that the public gets a chance to see the numbers as well and they have a chance to see if there's going to be an impact on the cost of living. So I certainly am supportive of the amendment. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the amendment. The honourable Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will support the amendment. I think it is important to get public opinion on this and, hey, there's an election campaign coming. What a great election issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the amendment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

To the motion, as amended. The honourable Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know if we need a bridge, I don't know if the Deh Cho Bridge is a priority of northerners. I suggest that we have some more consultation to ascertain the answer to those questions and I'm not sure if we're not just jumping in because this Legislative Assembly is coming to a close. I don't know what the panic is all of a sudden on the bridge, but I want to say I do support the Deh Cho Bridge myself because it's good for Hay River and it's close enough to Hay River that there's going to be some economic activity for Hay River around the construction of this bridge. I'm looking forward to that and I'd like to see that pre-cast concrete forms or pieces that they need to build for the deck, I'd like to see that plant located in Hay River. So we'll be lobbying for that.

So I am in agreement, in principle, with the idea of a bridge, but the questions raised in this motion are valid questions. When we started off, when we passed the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation Act, this was a \$70 million project. Now it's a \$150 million project and it's just good business, it's just good government, it just makes sense to reconfirm our business case and then all those good and valid arguments can be raised. If we wait, it's going to cost more and the inflation is going to drive the price up and we can just have that discussion and enter into this feeling very confidently that we're doing the right thing as opposed to just jumping in at the deep end just because this Assembly is coming to a close and we think that somehow the time is of the essence. I think we could just take time to answer those questions. The government can come back with the answers to those questions very, very quickly if they choose to. So this isn't necessarily something that would delay a decision either. So I would encourage the government to answer these questions and I support the motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the amended motion. The honourable Member from Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in support of this motion, but I have to agree with some of my colleagues here. I do support in principle that we could use a bridge, but I do support this motion as amended because, as various other Members have pointed out, it does make us more accountable and more transparent; more importantly, it makes us more responsible to the electorate. As far as I can see, this bridge is going to be paid for by all residents of the NWT over the next 35 or 40 years and I think it's to those residents that we owe all the transparent information that we can give them to ensure that we're making a really informed and responsible decision in that spending over the next 35 years that they're going to be out of pocket with.

So, Mr. Speaker, we, here in the northern part of the NWT and Yellowknife, the Tlicho, Providence, the communities, you know, we've lived with the ferry since day one and even beyond that. I don't see anybody in Yellowknife, for instance, complaining that they're out of pocket in the cost of living as compared to Hay River or south of the lake because we don't have a bridge. To me, through this

motion, I'd like to see the government show me that there is evidence that the people up here in the northern part of the NWT with the connection of the bridge is going to make life all that much sweeter and cheaper for everybody here. We know houses are skyrocketing north and south of the lake. It's pretty much all relative where we are and I just can't support a simple notion that a \$150 million or \$160 million bridge is going to make things all that much better here, and people are going to have more money to spend, and it's going to be easier for industry to come here and work in the northern regions with the bridge in place, because all we're looking at really is three weeks to a month that we're out. We're innovative and creative here in the NWT and we always find ways, cheaper ways of working to remain sustainable. So when the government does come back and gives us some impact benefits analysis, a cost of living analysis that shows we could really benefit over the long run, gee whiz, I'll stand behind them 110 percent, 1,000 percent, wherever you want. But right now I do like the idea of a bridge. I'm not just going to fully endorse it just because of the fact that it's a good idea. I'd like to see that the numbers do show that we will have savings over the long term and people will benefit over the long term. I'll just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the motion, as amended. Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will stand up to support this motion as amended. When the Premier made his sessional statement it became clear that he announced that the project will move ahead. I did get some calls from back home on why this government should invest \$130 million in this Deh Cho Bridge.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, I think that this government at times would think that Ottawa is not listening to us when we do talk about issues that affect us. What's more important I think in my riding back in the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta, we really feel left out in terms of projects that we think are important. To go ahead and decide, you know, let's go ahead with the Deh Cho Bridge, it really causes disappointment back home in terms of infrastructure that's required.

In regard to the amount of time down here that people have to be without, or what you call a certain link from south to north, you're only looking at four weeks in a year. Take a look at back home. Once the ice road goes in in mid-May, we have to rely on the airlines right until mid-December when the ice road is open again. When you take a look at the time span, it's costly for us.

So I like the motion that's put forward because, like Mr. Ramsay said, we're not trying to stop this bridge, but all we want is more information with regard to the total costing of the bridge and I really think it's important that the Members on that side really take consideration of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion, as amended. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to enter into this debate today and I'd like to thank the Members for bringing the motion forward. I'd like to start off by saying I do have concerns about this motion. I like the fact that we're doing the debate, but I do have

concerns about the motion in that it sort of casts a little bit of dark shadow on something I think is great news and a great project and something that we should all get behind 1,000 percent. Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the kind of innovative, visionary, a big action item that governments should do more of. We should build the roads all the way to Tuktoyaktuk. We should build every bridge in Sahtu...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

---Applause

**MS. LEE:** That's what governments do. Governments build schools, they build hospitals, they build roads. We don't always ask what's in it for us in terms of profit. These are public infrastructure and governments are supposed to do that.

Mr. Speaker, for anybody to say that we are sort of putting this in the front of the queue at the expense of another, has not done enough research. Mr. Speaker, people out there expect us to act on some of the things. This has been on the books for eight years. I will submit to you, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the rare projects that actually went through a legislative review process. That hasn't been done for any school infrastructure or courthouse; that's not a normal process. This was a huge item. This was a decision made by the government eight years ago that we would do this. This has been worked on ever since and it's about time that we get off our butts and make some decisions.

Mr. Speaker, when this discussion has been going on, I know communities are divided, there's not unanimous support, but I could tell you many people are saying build that bridge. Mr. Speaker, some people ask what is the urgency. Mr. Speaker, if you go to the Department of Indian Affairs' website, there is a little article about the Deh Cho project and you'll learn from that, I mean I'm sure it's everywhere too and I've mentioned this before, the highway from the NWT border to Yellowknife started in 1968. It took 40 years to build. Forty years ago if somebody said we're going to build this highway and it's going to cost \$540 million in 2007 dollars, everybody would have said take a hike, that is too expensive, let's study this thing to death, let's see if we can afford it. Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. In 1975, the estimate for the bridge was \$25 million. At the \$150 million estimated, that is quite reasonable 30 years later.

So I know I can appreciate some Members in this House that are worried that \$150 million going into the Deh Cho Bridge over North Slave is going to somehow take away money for their projects. I have to tell you -- and I wish the government would do a better job of explaining that -- that is not what is going to happen. We're not taking away \$150 million from the government capital budget and plunking it on the North Slave for the benefit of Yellowknife. That is not what is happening. We don't have that money in the capital budget. What is happening is we have a 3P project, it's a great agreement, we have equity partners who are going to do the financing and the government is going to spend the money they normally spend anyway on ferry delivery and associated costs.

Mr. Speaker, I will give you the details, Mr. Speaker, for those who are out there who are being fed misinformation and fear about this Deh Cho project, Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation will raise sufficient equity and debt financing to design, finance and construct the bridge to agreed upon standards. The Government of the Northwest Territories and Deh Cho Bridge Corporation will enter into an agreement for a 35-year concession period,

during which the DBC will own, operate and maintain the bridge. During this period, the GNWT will pay a contribution from ongoing ferry ice bridge savings approximately \$1.5 million annually, but it's inflating. The GNWT will also collect and pay a toll on commercial vehicles crossing the bridge, approximately \$3 million annually, increasing with traffic and inflation. Mr. Speaker, total revenue, which was estimated a few years back to be about \$4.5 million in year one, will be used to service and reduce the debt, operate and maintain the bridge and provide a return on shareholders' equity. Annual costs will include the debt servicing, interest and principal of approximately \$3 million, and operations and maintenance of approximately half a million for a total year one cost of approximately \$3.5 million. The key word here is inflation and let's talk about inflation and that's where the urgency comes from.

Mr. Speaker, eight years ago when this bridge was an idea and it was estimated at about \$30 million, no one in Yellowknife could have envisioned that we would look at a real estate guide for \$500,000 and not blink. Eight years ago we could have never imagined that. In eight years, Mr. Speaker, the prices in Yellowknife and North Slave have at least doubled if not went up by at least twice. So of course there's inflationary pressure on this project. For any Members to suggest that we need to revisit this whole thing because the cost of living went up by 100 percent, I don't understand that. The nature of the project has not changed and I'm trying to tell you that this Assembly had gone through a thorough review. I do support that this government has to do a better job of explaining to the people the content of this project, but to say that because the cost of building this project and financing this project has gone up a little that it changes the nature of the project is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I have a problem with this motion because that's what it does. It makes it sound like we're sort of hoodwinking a project under the knowledge of the people. That's not the case, Mr. Speaker. When you're doing a cost and benefits analysis, the motion suggests we've got to look at the cost benefit analysis that suggests that this bridge will somehow increase the cost of living for people in Yellowknife. I want to tell you, once again, when I was a member of GED, we did public hearings through the Territories and in Yellowknife about Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and people have said, and the trucking associations or the Co-op, all the grocers, they have told us that having no bridge over the Mackenzie River is increasing the costs of doing business in the North. I'm telling you eight years later, and the cost of living has gone up in every other way, the cost of not having the bridge is very, very high. I support the bridge 1,000 percent because I believe...

---Applause

...I believe in my heart that this bridge will reduce the cost of living for Yellowknifers and put everybody who lives in the North, and let me say when you go to Wal-Mart I see more people from outside communities and, may I add, Mr. Speaker, that it will reduce the cost of living for everybody in the Northwest Territories.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Right. Cheers to Yellowknife.

---Applause

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I have indicated many a time, not having access because of the ice break-up in the springtime and in the fall, it could amount anywhere between six to eight weeks in a year and I know and I

appreciate that in many communities that's the state of being all year round. I appreciate that and I believe they should get the bridge too. That's not to say that Yellowknife should not get that. We have 20,000 people and the businesses and all the services we provide that get closed down twice a year and there is a cost to that, Mr. Speaker. The trucking companies pay extra money when they have to come to Yellowknife, not just a delay in time, there's an extra premium for having to drive here, Mr. Speaker. The businesses all over Yellowknife have to store extra inventory to get ready. The freeze-up and the spring break-up is not pre-determined; nobody knows when that's going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, so there is a lot of cost in not having this and we need to understand that. It's about time that the Members of this House consider the fact that not having the bridge is increasing the cost of living for the residents and businesses of Yellowknife, and for that reason I cannot understand, for the life of me, why all the MLAs from Yellowknife are not getting behind 1,000 percent for this project.

Mr. Speaker, if you try to do a house renovation...Excuse me, I can't hear. Mr. Speaker, I have to speak louder and louder because I can't hear what I am saying. Mr. Speaker, during the spring thaw and break-up, there are lots of things that you cannot get. This past three or four months, all the fresh stuff, all the milk, all have to be flown in. There is a cost to that. I know that happens in other communities, so I support the bridge for everybody else.

Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude by saying...Mr. Speaker, let me just say...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Pass me a napkin, please.

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker...Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying, if I may, if I may conclude by saying...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Go for it, Sandy!

**MS. LEE:** Geez, Mr. Speaker, what I want to tell you is this project has had more review, and more input, and more study, and more effort than any other project we know. It has gone through a lengthy process. Oh yes, and there is a benefit to Fort Providence area and I understand the Member from Sahtu said talking to his family they don't know what this project is...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame.

**MS. LEE:** But, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, I have been through many, many briefings where the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the Community Alliance sees this as a great opportunity for them to partake in all the activities that are going on in North Slave area that they have not been able to take advantage of. They're not near the diamond mines, they're not near anywhere in the pipeline corridor, this is going to be a P3 partnership project where they will be able to get some profit out of this so that they can spend that money to invest in their communities. Anybody who questions about the value of this project for that community should go and talk to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and get an update on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that this was reviewed and at some point the legislators who are voted in to do the job on behalf of the people and to make decisions and get some stuff done, it's time to do that. This has been on the books for eight years.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

**MS. LEE:** To say in all the three bullets here, studying the cost of living issues, it suggests that somehow this bridge

will increase the cost of living, and this is why I had to do the whole song and dance about the fact that in fact the case is completely reverse, the case is completely reverse. This bridge will reduce the cost of living for the North and for Yellowknife and the surrounding area. We have to do everything we can, it will benefit everybody, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to do something to avoid a situation that we had earlier in the month when we are at risk of running out of fuel to supply our community, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Float planes.

**MS. LEE:** Most importantly, if we don't do this, we are increasing the chance of Nunavut going ahead with the port in Keewatin. Mr. Speaker, surely Members would not think that it's better off for North Slave to not have a bridge and make it favourable for Nunavut. So, Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the philosophy and the pretext of this motion because it does not do what I think we all should do, which is get behind this bridge 1,000 percent because it's going to benefit us and it's going to cost less doing it this way than any other way and this is the best time to do it than any other time we will find for the next 35 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion, as amended. The honourable Member from Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, I'd like to indicate that I'm prepared to arm wrestle the Member for Hay River South for the pre-cast concrete plant...

---Applause

**AN HON. MEMBER:** I'd love to see that.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** I'd like to offer my commiserations and condolences to the supreme irritation the Member from Range Lake must go through. We've not been able to get her avocados and her papayas...

---Laughter

...as freshly as she would like.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oooh.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Sour grapes.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** As well, Mr. Speaker, the Member made a comment that this motion somehow casts a dark shadow over the bridge project. In fact, the darkness that has shrouded and has cloaked this project is the lack of information and involvement of the Regular Members and the intent of this motion is to cast some light and lift that shroud...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Yeah.

---Applause

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** ...and cloak of darkness that surrounds this project. Everybody here says they support the project. We are talking about a case of due diligence. The other concern I have, Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the discussion and I followed the debate in the last couple weeks is the 3P project may now only be a 1P project where the Government of the Northwest Territories is, in fact, carrying all the costs, and all the liability, and all the responsibility, and all the risk and in fact becomes a government project.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** One hundred and fifty million.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good motion and I think we should get that information and the people should know this and they should have the comfort that this is being done. The landscape and ground has changed under which the initial plans were made to build this bridge. So yes, the bridge is a good project and it's been on the books for eight years...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Eight years.

---Applause

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** I've been railing in this House for 12 years for chipseal of Highway No. 5.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hey. Hear! Hear!

---Applause

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** That's a good project, so is Highway No. 6. So has every Member from Nunakput since I've been here raised the issue about the highway to Tuk or fixing up the Dempster Highway. So yes, we have, as we all seek now, far more projects than we have resources. So I know maybe the Dempster is not good for Yellowknife directly, but it's good for the rest of the Northwest Territories.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

---Applause

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** So, Mr. Speaker, I would support this motion and it is an issue of lifting the shroud of darkness and veil of uncertainty, if not darkness, that currently seems to hang over this project and it's a case most fundamentally of due diligence. So I will be supporting this motion.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the amended motion. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Tough acts to follow, Mr. Speaker, but I'll get in here and do my bit at bat here. There's almost a theatrical, dramatic element to this and a question that we can put to ourselves, Mr. Speaker, to bridge or not to bridge?

---Laughter

There's the rub. I've been 43 years living in Yellowknife and in the North, Mr. Speaker. I've seen several versions of this movie. They've all had the same sad, sorry, no-go ending and it's about time now that we can change the ending of this story.

---Applause

I can't imagine a better time for us to endeavour to do this. Four years ago, in fact almost to the day, Mr. Chairman, it was June 12, 2003, four years ago that the Deh Cho Bridge Act passed in here and I was happy to be one of the people to support it then. So we tried to rewrite the ending of the story then and it's before us, not the bill of course, but the same nagging, lingering questions. Gee, can we really do it? Yes - we - can.

---Applause

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Yeah.

**MR. BRADEN:** Why should we go ahead? If we don't stop saying, as my colleague here -- maybe that didn't pick up on the mic -- Mr. Miltenberger said. The little engine that can. We are. If we don't believe we're the little engine that can, then what are we doing here?

--Applause

We've got to get this one going. Mr. Speaker, the colours that I wear federally are no secret to this House, but I must say that I have got....

---Interjection

**MR. BRADEN:** Careful. I must say I have some confidence in what we have heard from Ottawa...

---Interjection

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you very much.

---Laughter

...in the financing proposals. They are ideas, they aren't nailed down yet but they are ideas that have been put out there that will indeed enable Ottawa to come to the table for this project.

I asked the question a little while ago and my colleague Ms. Lee referenced the other visionary transportation projects that are before us now. One is a port and road project that would come down from the North that would, in effect, bypass the infrastructure we already have here. What would be seriously threatened if the signal that went up from this Assembly is we don't know about investing in this very significant piece of infrastructure across the Deh Cho River? So if we start rewriting another bad ending to this story, that's the signal we are going to be putting out. We are going to compromise this and my colleagues from north of Yellowknife or the North Slave region, the Tlicho, what chances are they going to get of roads that will connect to communities? We had better send a signal out to industry and the rest of Canada that we believe in ourselves, we believe in the future and this is one way of showing it.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I am more and more concerned about the environment conditions, climate change, that is going to erode the predictability, the security and the stability of the Mackenzie River crossing. We are facing more frequent, more surprised interruptions because of low water, because of ice conditions, combinations that are spilling, if not at least a nuisance and inconvenience, they are someday going to pose real hardship for the economy of this whole region as well as the safety of the travelling public and the crews on the Merv Hardie ferry. We may be compelled, for reasons beyond economics, to make sure there is that 24/7 connection.

Mr. Speaker, the mines are going to pay for this bridge. We are blessed to have that resource there and those companies there that we will be able to put to work to pay for this bridge. If that bridge had been in place now with the toll structure that we know of, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$2.5 million would have been collected this winter, Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 million this winter from the traffic that went up to supply the mines.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** We are losing money!

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It's all going to Ottawa.

**MR. BRADEN:** I recently read that I think by 2012, something like 14,000 truckloads of material are going to be required compared to the 10,000 that went up this year. How much more in fees are we going to collect? Mr. Speaker, every year that that bridge is not built is that much revenue that is not going to be coming back into this project. Let's build it now.

---Interjection

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker. I am not going to support this motion. I do believe though in putting it forward, my colleague Mr. Ramsay and those who are supporting it, were putting something constructive on the floor here, Mr. Speaker. That is that the information requested in the motion is nothing more than four years ago in the debate. Okay, I'm getting there. The government should be very forthcoming in saying we will present the revised analysis. We will present the revised risk situations, the revised traffic numbers. Here is what we are willing to put in front of people. That has to be something that the government, at its peril, will not present to this Assembly and indeed to the public of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, there is one part of the bill or of the motion that I do find troubling and it's on this basis that I find I cannot support it. The motion recommends that the government not enter into a binding agreement committing it to the Deh Cho project until it has provided Regular Members and the public with said information. If we say we do not want you to enter into a binding agreement until you have shown us the information, that still doesn't give us a veto or a say. The bill doesn't ask for that, but the signal that this motion sends out, Mr. Speaker, to financiers, to constructors, to regulators or anyone else involved in this project, is that we are putting it on hold again. We are putting it at political risk because of the upcoming election.

We need to keep the mandate alive for the government to continue to make this deal, but as I said and I want to underscore this very clearly and as emphatically as I can, we are old. Those new revisions, those new levels of risk that the government feels it can and should undertake on our behalf for this project. Do this and I think we will be able to proceed with confidence. But I am not prepared, Mr. Speaker, to ask the government, in effect, to put a stall on this project. I want to rewrite some history and I am not prepared to revisit the story that we've seen time and time again, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the amended motion. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, in summary of what I said, this whole purpose of the motion that's in front of us, I think it has to do with transparency and accountability. They've talked about this bridge for a number of years. Even when I came on board two years ago, I hadn't really heard of the bridge project. I heard it may happen depending on federal funding. If federal funding comes in, then make a move on it. All of a sudden, we are in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and boom, boom, boom, we want to build this bridge.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have to consult with our neighbouring groups. We have to consult with the Tlicho Government that are impacted with this as well. Over and over, we talked about the all-weather road, a road to resources, the road to Tuk. Those are key important issues in our region. In three or four weeks, the ferry is not running. We have survived how many years now? I am sure we could survive another thousand years.

I am not saying I do not support the bridge, but we have to get our priorities straight first. That means we have to serve our communities. We must do this together as our elders have stressed over and over every time we go to the community; work together. Have BLT in our community; bannock, lard and tea. Just face to face, let's

jump on board, open the door to the big bus that you guys are travelling on. You got lots of room on there. We need to share the information.

All we are asking for is transparency. Give us some documentation that's been outlined here. Once you do that, consult with our neighbouring groups, get their input. What does an elder think in Behchoko? What does an elder think in Whati? As Ms. Lee indicated, we see more people in the community here when the ferry is running or when there is a bridge in, but at the same time we will see even more people come in when there is an all-weather road. We will see more people at Tim Horton's, Wal-Mart, all those stores. They will certainly benefit. Even my colleagues down south, they will benefit as well. Those are key areas that we need to focus on.

I would just like to close off, Mr. Speaker, and that is that we definitely need to share information and move forward. We are sitting here waiting for information. Apparently the bus is starting over there, we need to jump on board. Let's work together. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion, as amended. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like all my other colleagues here, probably every single one in this building would believe that good infrastructure is critical. It's important to the growth of the Northwest Territories as a whole. It's good for the people. It's good for the people, it's good for business, it's good for everything. Mr. Speaker, just like the road to Tuk someday, just like the bridges and roads in the Sahtu and maybe the roads that link the Tlicho communities, good infrastructure to Yellowknife such as a bridge is a significant step forward for everyone. Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely behind the principles of the bridge; absolutely.

Let's put it this way. The fact is, I think we have Members here who are refusing to read the motion. Mr. Speaker, the motion does not derail the motion in any step, in any method. It does not stop this in any way. What it actually says is let's get some updated information. It says tell us what it's going to cost before we build it. Don't worry; don't tell us you will send us a bill later. Mr. Speaker, if we are talking about a \$100 bill cost, maybe I could believe blind faith. Maybe if we were talking about a \$1,000 project, I may be able to accept it on blind faith. But, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about a multi-million dollar project, I want us to ensure that we give the same amount of scrutiny we give to every one of those schools, every one of those RCMP centres, every one of those roads we plan to build. Mr. Speaker, we need to read this motion very carefully and it says all you have to do is bring the information to us. Then we will look at it. Mr. Speaker, we just want a hard number to know what we are talking about. Blind faith only works so far, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, blind faith will allow me to step over a puddle and hope that I won't fall in, but blind faith will not lead me to jump across this river and help support building this bridge without knowing what it's going to cost, Mr. Speaker. I don't think any Member here can accept, well don't worry, we will fill in the number later on the contract.

---Interjection

**MR. HAWKINS:** Well, I can't imagine anyone here is foolish enough to think that. Mr. Speaker, there is no blank cheque support from me on this project until we know



what it's going to cost. Mr. Speaker, if we can say we knew what it cost five years ago, that is completely unacceptable because Cabinet comes to us practically every month and says by the way, this project costs more than it did last year or last month and by the way, we need an extra 10 or 15 percent. You know what? It doesn't erode the fact that it's an important piece of infrastructure. It just further casts into concrete how important it is to get a real fixed dollar number on this project and then we can decide, is that number, if it's \$130 million, we can handle that debate and say is that acceptable? Maybe it is. If it's \$140 million, we need to have that number to say is that acceptable? Is it acceptable to put the coffers and the people in the Northwest Territories at risk for that type of value? Is it acceptable? So, Mr. Speaker, I won't talk as long as many of my other colleagues did...

---Applause

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Bless you!

**MR. HAWKINS:** I will tell you, it was painful sitting here listening...

---Laughter

**AN HON. MEMBER:** I know how you feel.

**MR. HAWKINS:** We promised to come here and not accept things just at any cost. Mr. Speaker, we can't accept this just at any cost in blind faith without having the sense of what this is going to cost. I think it is totally irresponsible of us to just assume it will be okay. Mr. Speaker, I do not assume it will be okay and I am not going to assume the federal government is going to come behind us and sweep up and say don't worry, we will cover the shortfall. We need to have a comfort letter from Ottawa. We need to have a comfort letter, heck, from Cabinet. That could be just in the fact of what it's really going to cost.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to make it absolutely clear that I am in support of the bridge, the principles of the bridge, but, Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept in blind faith to build the project without at least some facts of what it's going to cost. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion, as amended. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was looking at this over and over; nowhere I see in here where it says stop the bridge, don't build a bridge. I don't see that.

---Applause

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear! Hear!

**MR. MCLEOD:** I don't see that. Being one of the new Members, I would like to see some numbers. I am sure the people in Ulukhaktok and Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk were pleased to hear my colleague from Range Lake say the cost of living is going to be reduced throughout the Northwest Territories if we build that bridge across the Mackenzie. I am sure they were pleased to hear that. They talk about four weeks where they go without avocados.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Avocados!

**MR. MCLEOD:** In some of the marine communities, they have a four-week window to get their avocados.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** To get their avocados!

---Applause

**MR. MCLEOD:** They have to stockpile everything and by the time they get to it, the best before date expired 10 months ago.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear! Hear!

**MR. MCLEOD:** Anyway, I just want to stand up, Mr. Speaker, and say I do support this motion. There is nowhere in this motion that says don't build a bridge and it's harder for some of the Members from outside of the region, outside of Yellowknife, to support a project like this. We are not saying we don't want to see the bridge built. All we are saying is just show us some information. I will be happy with that. That's all we are asking. We aren't saying don't build a bridge. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion, as amended. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be very brief.

---Applause

First of all, let me say that Cabinet will not be voting on this motion because it is a recommendation to us. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a couple of points. Due diligence and transparency, those are things we live by. Due diligence is here and that is why we have the financial situation we enjoy right now that enables us to do this kind of project, is because we have done due diligence over the life of our government.

Mr. Speaker, transparency, yes, we have already committed and we will commit to giving the committee the best information we have. Mr. Speaker, we will do that as the final negotiations are done on the bridge.

Mr. Speaker, that is what the public expects of us: due diligence, transparency. But, Mr. Speaker, the public also who elected us expect us to get things done. They don't want us to talk forever and ever on these things. At some point, we have to get things done. Mr. Speaker, there is no issue...Let me say every community has its issue that it talks about all the time. Some people talk about where the caribou went. Some people talk about the flooding. I tell you, in Yellowknife, the one issue that has been talked about forever is the bridge, the need for a bridge. You go talk to some of our most senior seniors and you will find some of them have little \$5 share certificates that they bought on the bridge in the 1960s or early '70s. This has been talked about in the public more than any other single issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that even after we build a bridge, there will be a lot of debate about whether we should have built the bridge. So it's going to continue forever.

Mr. Speaker, this has been talked about for 30 or 40 years, it's been talked about in this House since the Bridge Corporation brought it to us in 2001 and we passed the legislation in the last government. It's been talked about each time we came forward with the need to increase the loan guarantee. This has been debated and talked about more than any other issue that this past government or this government has dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, let me say in closing, it would be an ideal world and a great world if we could do every project in every region at the same time. That would be great, but we can't. We have to take some of these projects and deal with them one by one and get them done or otherwise we will still be talking about chipsealing Highway No. 5 and a road up the Mackenzie and so on

two or three governments from now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will go to the mover of the motion for closing remarks. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Bring it on home!

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleagues for their support, those that are willing to support the motion. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will try to keep this brief, but the project has changed and some Members in their arguments are jumping to the fact that this project was discussed. It was discussed four years ago in committee meetings. I attended these committee meetings as a city councillor. That was four years ago, Mr. Speaker. Information has changed. The project has gone from \$70 million to \$130 million plus.

The other thing that has changed, Mr. Speaker, if I could, and hopefully some people could understand this, is the bridge project was going to have the ferry operation money, in addition to that the ice crossing maintenance money, which was about \$1.5 million. That plus the tolls was going to pay for this piece of infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, that has changed. The Premier has admitted it has changed. In addition to that money, colleagues, those that are paying attention...

---Applause

---Laughter

In addition to that, the government wants to come back and top that up with at least \$2 million more of public money. When has this Assembly, Mr. Speaker...Mr. Speaker, if I could...When has this Assembly had a debate on that \$2 million plus dollars that is going to go into that project? When?

---Interjection

**MR. RAMSAY:** We have not had that discussion. Mr. Speaker, to me, that's the fundamental argument here, absolutely. I knocked on doors during the last campaign, not one person when I knocked on their door said build a bridge. The main concern out there in Yellowknife and in our communities is the cost of living, the cost of living.

---Interjection

**MR. RAMSAY:** Okay, well hey. Some Members are saying we need a bridge, but nobody in government has proven that if we build a bridge, the cost of living is going to go down. My main concern, Mr. Speaker, from my constituents, the city of Yellowknife, the Tlicho communities and the Akaitcho communities, is that the cost of living by building this bridge is going to go up. If you think otherwise, I think you are fooling yourselves, Mr. Speaker. That is the main thing.

---Interjection

**MR. RAMSAY:** You know what? Before we go blindly into a project, Mr. Speaker, before we jump there and we go there, prove to me and prove to this House, government, that the cost of living in my community and the other communities here will not go up. You have not done that. That has not happened. I can't see how building a bridge and charging tolls and who knows what the tolls are going to be, Mr. Speaker. They are at \$6; they are going to go up with inflation. Who knows? That cost is passed on to consumers, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Take it home!

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, if I could, some of my colleagues seem to think money does grow on trees here in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't. We have scarce resources. The Premier negotiates a new formula financing agreement and the first thing he does is run out and try to find a project to spend \$2 million plus a year on. How is that being fiscally responsible? I stand here before my colleagues and I am trying my best and I ran on a platform of being fiscally responsible and it means something to me. It does. I am not going to give carte blanche to a project where I don't know what the final numbers are. I have no idea. I have no idea what the tolls are going to be. I have no idea what it's going to mean to my constituents. How can I unequivocally support a project like that? How can I do that? I can't do that. I couldn't go out this October and knock on doors in my riding having done something like that, Mr. Speaker. To me, that's not a responsible thing to do.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** October is too late!

**MR. RAMSAY:** Oh yes, September. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, September. Again, I want to thank the Members that are supporting this motion and I am going to ask for a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

In closing this out, this does not say do not build a bridge. All it says is please, please, please give us the information before you...

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Please!

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Pretty please.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Before any agreement is entered into, please let the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories know what you are doing. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. All those in favour to the amended motion, please stand.

**Recorded Vote**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Ramsay; Mr. Pokiak; Mr. Villeneuve; Mr. Lafferty; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Yakeleya; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. Hawkins; Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed to the motion, please stand.

---Applause

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Ms. Lee, Mr. Braden.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. Handley; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Bell.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Results of the vote are: in favour, nine; opposed, two; abstaining, six. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 3-15(6), with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

**ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS**

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Committee Report 3-15(6), Child and Family Services Act. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. We will do that after a break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We were dealing with Committee Report 3-15(6), Report on Matters Related to Child and Family Services Act. There are six recommendations in the form of motions. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs read into this House, for the record, the committee report. It dealt with issues arising out of our committee's review of the amendment to the Child and Family Services Act. In our discussions and public hearings, we came to realize that there were lots of concerns that were brought to us by the members of the public, as well as within our committee. We chose to file a different report on that because we realize that some of those issues that were brought up were not within the...(inaudible)...of the amendment which was quite narrow in scope. So we have read into the record six motions earlier, recommendations, and we want to turn them into motions in this setting.

To start with, I would like to ask the deputy chair of the committee, Mr. Norman Yakeleya, to do the first motion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Yakeleya.

**Mr. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the point that we heard very clearly from our deliberations was in terms of respecting the use of the aboriginal languages in sensitive issues like this and the culture and the emotional state of some of these families and communities that are being dealt with in this manner. Madam Chair, there are certain practices by social services and child protection workers that, at times, require them to have our people, especially the families, understand what's really happening, haven't been communicated through their language. Sometimes the language barrier there causes some further hardships and grief and further stress on the families. So, Madam Chair, we want to give the recommendations to the government to use the First Nations language when they are dealing with issues like this and that they make every possible means of supporting resources to the families here in terms of how they deal with children, how they deal with mothers and taking into account the cultural background of the aboriginal people. Sometimes if you ask if they want something, they won't say yes. Sometimes they won't even ask. They will say the workers didn't ask or people didn't ask for it and they won't ask for it. You have to take cultural sensitivity and cultural understanding of the parents in communities.

**Committee Motion 4-15(6): Translation Services Offered By Child Protection Workers, Carried**

So, Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the existing practice of offering translation service be continued and that child protection workers be required to take into account the emotion and cultural background of a person being offered translation services and when there is any doubt providing necessary translation services as a matter of course. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Braden.

**Committee Motion 5-15(6): Discretionary Power To Place Apprehended Children With Non-Custodial Parent, Carried**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Minister examines the issue of involving non-custodial parents in caring for apprehended children and, if necessary, make required necessary and regulatory changes to allow child protection workers the discretionary powers to place apprehended children with the non-custodial parent on a temporary basis, providing it is in the best interest of the child. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** A bit of the context to this, Madam Chair. Of course, parental break-up is prevalent everywhere. In the event that a child is removed from the parent that does have custody, we heard in our travels that, in some cases, the other parent, while they may be sort of separated and out of the household, could still be a very viable and a safe place for the apprehended child to go. I guess what we want to do is ask the Minister to clear the way. I think there are some barriers in place now that may prevent childcare workers from going to the separated non-custodial parent. We think that there is value in allowing a childcare worker to look at that as an option. It can be very painful for a non-custodial parent to see their child going to a non-related home because of some systemic problem. We think that this option should be made available. That is the purpose of the motion, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

**Committee Motion 6-15(6): Placement Of Apprehended Children With Extended Families In Home Communities, Carried**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommend that the Minister issue a directive reinforcing the use of extended families in the placement of apprehended children and that every effort be made to place children with extended family within the child's home community before a child protection worker considers placement in a foster home in or outside the child's home community. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with this idea of using extended families for the placement of an apprehended child. I just have two caveats or concerns about that. I think that extended families should receive the same remuneration to care for that child as would a foster family that would not be related to that child. The reason being is that sometimes, just because it is an extended family, it doesn't mean that they don't have other obligations, a job or may need to procure childcare or support. I think sometimes it has been the thinking of the system that if you put a child with an extended family member, automatically there should be no financial assistance for that family member to take care of that child. I think that is maybe one of the reasons why there has been some resistance, because it can create quite a change in the family dynamics to take in especially younger children that need some supplementary care or babysitting. That is one thing that I would say about that.

Another thing is that I don't think that extended family members should automatically be considered a viable placement either. I know there is always the overriding thought that they will do what is in the best interests of the child, but I think that the extended family should still, even though they are related, be subject to the same kind of home study, stability study, that any foster family caring for a child would undergo. It can be done fairly quickly. It can be done on an emergency basis. It can be done and assessed fairly quickly, but there have been some pretty publicized cases where children were being cared for by grandparents or extended family members that it was not a good situation for that kid. I don't think you can just categorically say because this person is a relative, they are an ideal placement. It should be subject to the same kinds of criteria that you would use in approving any home for a child that has been apprehended. Those are just my two comments and concerns on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Lafferty. To the motion.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just highlighted the whole purpose of this motion that was brought forward was due to the fact that we consulted with the communities. The community elders, mostly elders, have told us that with the apprehension process, most of the kids are transferred to Yellowknife. That is the whole idea behind this motion where we always stress the importance of having the child with an extended family member. I do agree with Mrs. Groenewegen from Hay River South, that there has to be a fit home as well in the community with the extended family. Is it a safe home? It has to be a safe home. That should be a priority. But there are other extended family members within the community. We all know each other. I fully respect that

and I fully support that, too. There has to be a safe home. We are doing this for the safety and well-being and also the best interests of the child. At the same time, we come from a small community. We also speak our language, as well. We are also lucky to have our cultural background as well with our elders in the community. Certainly, we cannot punish the child when he/she has been taken to a bigger city where a child does not speak English, but the English speaking foster parents are there. So I do understand to some degree that it is a last resort. Yes, I will support that if it is the last resort because of the well-being of the child. At the same time, we must work in the community to identify those suitable homes for the extended family. Mr. Chair, that is the whole purpose of the motion that is brought forward to us. I just want to highlight that. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with my colleagues here. I sort of agree with Mrs. Groenewegen with regard to remuneration of extended family members. I also think that it is important. I know that child welfare workers work really closely with families to investigate the homes all the time. That is one of the responsibilities, to make sure that wherever you take the child, apprehend the child, you have to place them in a safe home whether that is extended family or a foster care home. One of the difficulties in small communities, though, is trying to get foster homes, because a lot of the people are afraid that, if the family members know where the child is, they will come knocking on the door. That is one of the reasons why it is very hard to allocate foster homes in the home community. One of the best options is to use extended families in cases like that. In extreme cases, I strongly believe that, if the child's welfare is at stake, if the department has no other choice but to send them outside of the community, do it as a last resort. That is all I have to say, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Pokiak.

**Committee Motion 7-15(6): Development Of Family Services Committees In Communities, Carried**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Minister direct the department and authorities to continue with ongoing activities and to design and adequately resource a plan to develop child and family services committees in the communities and that this plan be presented to the Standing Committee on Social Programs as part of the 2009-2010 business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to add to this. I will be voting in favour of this motion. I just want to state that, in our committee discussions about all that we heard, we were quite puzzled by the fact that, as of now, there is only one family services committee in the communities and that is in Fort McPherson. We also recalled when we

were in Fort McPherson about a year ago, we were told that up to one-third of children in that community were being apprehended. I think the community felt really important that day getting to action and set up a committee and to not only deal with the situation, but work towards reducing the need to apprehend children. I think they have done that job because I believe the latest statistics showed that the apprehension has gone down. I do appreciate that there have to be a lot of community leaders working in different areas to make that happen. I think what is happening here is the legislation provides for such communities, but there have not been parallel resources that go with that or the leadership and support on the part of the government to facilitate that process. So the possibility that was envisioned in legislation has been allowed to fall by the wayside. Through this recommendation, we are hoping that the department will pay more attention and work with communities at least in major centres or in communities where there are more apprehensions, where there are frequent apprehensions. We could understand that in some communities they have not had an apprehension so there might not be a need for such a committee, but I think we feel what is happening is these committees are not in place. Their absence is not noticed until a child is actually being apprehended. By then, it is too late to set up a committee and the people in the communities are left to wonder, how come we didn't have any say on what is going to happen with this child or what is in the best interests of the children? In order to avoid that, we need to have the department working more diligently to facilitate this from happening.

I do want to state that we do understand that there is a plan of care committee that gets set up when a child is apprehended. But this is something different than that. So I just want to put the context of this motion in order. We just would like to see the department putting some resources into this so that, while the child protection workers have to do their job of protecting the safety of the children, we do make some effort to involve the communities in talking about and in having a say on what is to happen to those children. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, committee. Mr. McLeod.

**Committee Motion 8-15(6): Resources Required To Increase The Number Of Foster Homes, Carried**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommend that the department work towards increasing the number of foster homes in the NWT and that a plan, complete with numbers of existing foster homes, targeted increases and required resources, be presented to the Standing Committee on Social Programs as part of the 2009-2010 business plans. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee recommended this motion because foster parents provide a very important service. I have had the opportunity at

one time to foster a couple of boys, so I have an idea of what is required of foster parents. To see that the government put a little bit more money raising the basic rates I think is a good thing. The cost is going up. One thing I would caution the government...Right now, you have people that aren't foster parents. A lot of these people care very deeply about children, their safety and their well-being so they, regardless of the remuneration, become foster parents just because they care about the well-being of these children. Now, the rates are going up. We are hoping to increase the number of foster homes that these children can be placed into, but I do want to caution the government to take great care in selecting and choosing who can be foster parents. I don't want to get into a situation where some people become foster parents because remuneration is a little higher than it normally is. So that would be something that I would caution the government to take into consideration. I do know that you have to go through quite a screening process to become foster parents, because of being through that and qualified foster parents in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. That is one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we thought we would bring this motion forward. I think it is a good motion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Ms. Lee.

**Committee Motion 9-15(6): Provision Of A Comprehensive Government Response To CR 3-15(6), Carried**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have one more, the last committee motion. I move that this committee recommends that the government provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 3-15(6) is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, committee. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move to report progress. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please? Mr. Ramsay.

**ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee has been considering Committee Report 3-15(6), Report on Matters Related to Child and Family Services Act. I would like to report progress, with six motions being adopted and consideration of Committee Report 3-15(6) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

**ITEM 22: THIRD READING OF BILLS**

**Bill 4: Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 4 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

**Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Child And Family Services Act**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 5 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Bill 16: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 16 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Anthony J. Whitford, is prepared to enter the Chamber to give assent to bills?

**COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**(Hon. Tony Whitford):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my privilege and my pleasure to be back here among you today. I know that you have all been busy in session this past week as we will see by the number of bills passed and the lively debate recorded.

With the onset of the high school graduations, I look forward to joining you at some of those at assemblies and other community events this summer as the invitations and time allows.

In the first week of May past, I have watched and participated in the Youth Parliament and must say how impressed I was with the calibre of our future parliamentarians.

---Applause

The Youth Parliament is a wonderful opportunity for young people to learn first hand how our government works. Having lived all of my life in the North, it is encouraging to see our youth provided with these learning opportunities at such an early age. I would like to compliment the Legislative Assembly for continuing this important role-playing exercise. I look forward to participating again next year.

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year since the territorial government moved from Ottawa to the North. I am amazed to have seen such change in our lifetime. I am proud to have been part of that evolution of government in the North. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the many people, the many men and women, who have worked before us, for their foresight and their commitment to bringing government home to people of the North.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act;
- Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Condominium Act;
- Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legal Services Act;
- Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act;
- Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act;
- Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008; and
- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Now, as we leave this House to return to our home communities for the summer, I want to wish you safe travels and a busy time until we meet again in August. Thank you, mahsi cho, quanami. That's it.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated. Colleagues, before we adjourn today, I would like to take this opportunity to commend you all for the work you have done and that you

have accomplished in this short period of time. I would also like to thank the Pages who have been with us this last week.

---Applause

We have had students from the Diamond Jenness High School in Hay River, Mackenzie Mountain School in Norman Wells, Moose Kerr School in Aklavik and Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson.

---Applause

We certainly appreciate the work that they all do for us. It is looking like a very busy summer for all Members as we prepare for the last sitting of the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Cabinet continues the work of government, committees are preparing to meet and travel throughout the Territories with upcoming legislation, and we will all use this time to continue to work diligently for our constituents. I hope we do it with as much vigor as was displayed in the Chamber this afternoon.

---Applause

Next week, I will be bringing the Mace of the Northwest Territories to the Princess Alexander School in Hay River and to Deninu School in Fort Resolution.

---Applause

The Honourable Premier, Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Clerk and the Sergeant-at-Arms, will be joining me to deliver the Speaker's educational Outreach Program. This program is aimed at NWT youth living in communities outside of Yellowknife and focussed on educating and motivating youth to learn about the role of the Legislative Assembly and its elected officials. It is also intended to create greater awareness among northerners. The Mace will also be on display at the Royal Canadian Legion in Hay River and at the Antoine Beaulieu Memorial Hall in Fort Resolution. We are preparing to bring this program to your community in the future.

I urge Members to carve out a little time in your busy schedules to spend with your families and friends during the short summer season, enjoying the upcoming Victoria Day holiday and taking part in the festivities surrounding National Aboriginal Day and Canada Day.

We have much to celebrate in our great territory and our great country. I wish you all good judgement as you continue with your work and safe travels throughout the territory this summer and I look forward to meeting you again in this House in August.

---Applause

Thank you, Members. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

#### ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, August 15, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions

10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, August 15, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 18:02.